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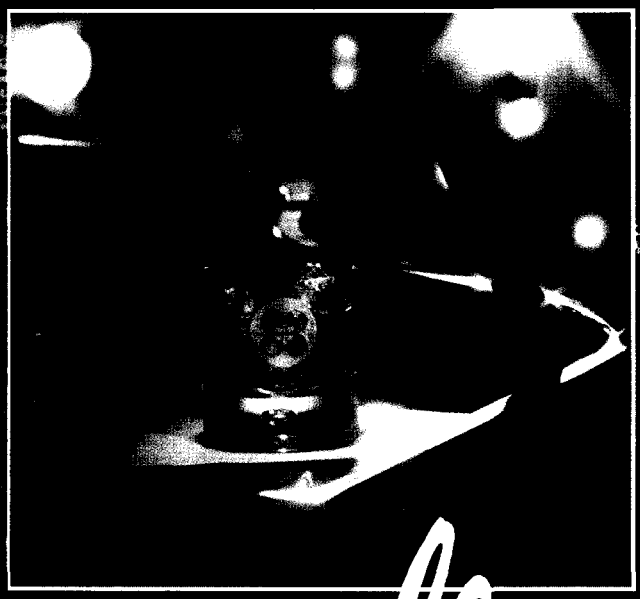

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Ian Wollington, student, King Edward VI School

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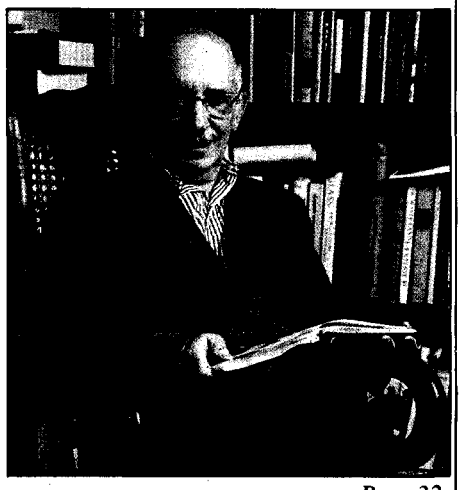

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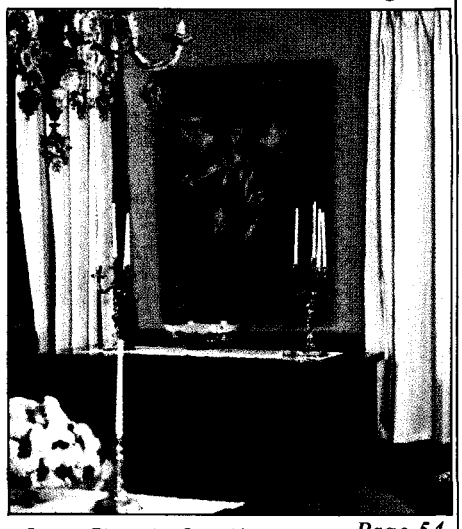

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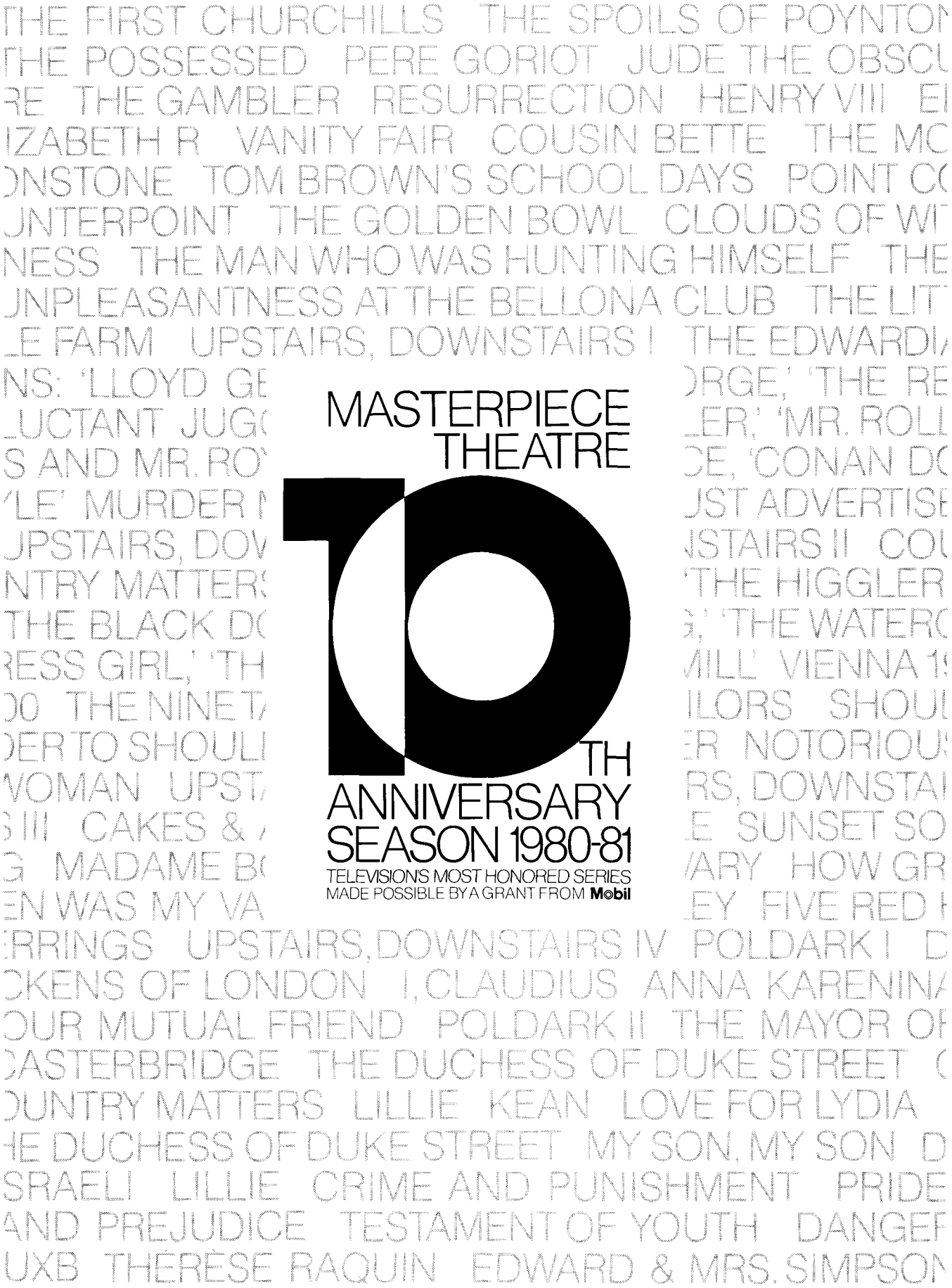
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LETTERS

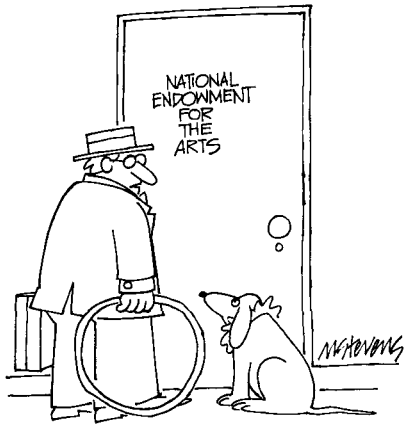
Burgess's Unearthly Vocabulary
Rhoda Koenig's article "The Unearthly Powers of Anthony Burgess" [December] was fascinating, especially because of the unusual words that she found in Mr. Burgess's latest book *Earthly Powers*. It may be that the text makes the meanings of the words clear. However, I looked up two of the words in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and couldn't find either of them. It may be that Mr. Burgess invented them, not an impossibility in his case. The words were "omnifutuant" and "brindize." Perhaps you could define them.

Janis Rosenblatt
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Rhoda Koenig replies: Though I, too, was unable to find these two words in any dictionary, I was assured by Mr. Burgess that they do in fact exist. He defined "brindize" as raising a toast, and "omnifutuant" as being sexually indiscriminate.

Jefferson, Not Lincoln
In his review "The Face of Lincoln" [December], Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. credits Lincoln with being "the greatest of American presidents." Although we all surely feel admiration for President Lincoln, one wonders how many historians agree with that assessment. More and more it appears that our brilliant third president holds that eminent status. Mr. Lincoln freed the slaves. But Thomas Jefferson, "Architect of Universal Education," as he has been recently termed, freed our minds and gave the idea of independence of thought to every individual.

Mildred Irwin Peterson
Sioux Falls, South Dakota



"Ready?"

Another Sign of the Times
I'm still chuckling over Thomas Middleton's "Sign Language" [December]. His examples reminded me of a marvelous sign I remember when I was a teacher at the Peking American School in China. Near our school there was a pharmacy that catered to both a traditional and a modern clientele: You could buy powered dragon bones or Bayer aspirin. In the display window was a large stuffed snow leopard adorned by a most remarkable set of artificial teeth. And in a broad sign above the grinning cat was painted in large letters, "False Eyes and Teeth Inserted—Latest Methodists." As signs go, I found that one hard to beat.

Robin A. Drews
Portland, Oregon

Provincialism Strikes Again
Whoever wrote the caption for the picture accompanying Wallace Stegner's review of Robert Redfern's book *Corridors of Time* [December] displays a severe case of Eastern provincialism. As any moderately knowledgeable westerner would know, the scene is *not* the Grand Canyon, but Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah. For shame!

Dr. Alan P. Macfarlane
Salt Lake City, Utah

The editors reply: Dr. Macfarlane is correct. The picture on page 66 was identified incorrectly. It is in fact of Bryce Canyon. We promise to get to the bottom of it.

TV News
I thought your article "Television News: Seeing Isn't Believing" [November] was excellent. Keep up the good work!

Alice H. Myers
Anaheim, California

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EDITORIAL

The Physician in Literature

It should be no surprise that almost every novelist or dramatist of any consequence—from Aeschylus to Walker Percy—has had something to say about doctors. The writer deals with the universals of human experience—and the struggle, not just to stay alive but to get the most out of life, is at the epicenter of those universals.

To the writer, the physician is not just a prescriber of medicaments but a symbol of all that is transferable from one human to another, short of immortality. We may not be able to live forever but we persist in the notion that the physician possesses the science and the artistry that will provide us with endless deferrals. We cannot be persuaded, apparently, that the physician does not have access to those fastnesses where the secrets of life are stored. To be able to listen to the human heart and draw meaning from its slightest vibrations or whispers; to be able to take a tiny droplet of blood and perceive its vital balances; to convert electric markings into precise knowledge of the body's chemical complexities—all these may represent science to the doctor, but to the patient they are powers that come from the gods.

Imagination and the art of writing go together. And, since imagination is the basic ingredient of hypochondria, writers have had little difficulty in suffering from all sorts of symptoms. Consider Marcel Proust, his windows shut and his blinds tightly drawn, seldom emerging from his flat, living in a habitat certain to intensify his ailments, only a few of which were organic but all of which kindled his imagination. The greater the writer's uncertainty about his/her health, the greater the dependence on the physician. It is here that we observe an element of reverence in the attitude of many writers toward physicians—if not of their persons then of their role.

It is natural that writers, in dealing with ultimate confrontations, should find the doctor such a convenient literary resource. The physicians may vary wildly in their personal and philosophical behavior, but they all offer rich material to the novelist. François Voltaire writes dispassionately in *Candide* of the helplessness of physicians when confronted by venereal disease—a penalty attached to the deepest pleasures. Alexander Pope takes such paradoxes in stride but also takes the view that the physician should not be expected to be kinder than God. Boris Pasternak, true to the Russian literary tradition, sees the physician as the embodiment of all the mixed emotions that the human tragi-comedy can produce.

> Zhivago's experiences, far from making him indifferent to suffering, enlarge his sensitivity.

Of all the Russian writers, perhaps none has exhibited greater fascination with the doctor than Leo Tolstoy. He brings all his gifts of descriptive irony to the account of the physician who treats Ivan Ilych. The doctor is supreme, invulnerable, and possesses a confident claim on the future. The patient is dependent, tentative, and a sure loser. A somewhat similar perception of the physician emerges from Fyodor Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment*. The sufferings of the ill are far more memorably described than any manifestations of compassion by the physician. Even when the physician is in love with his patient, as in Ivan Turgenev's "The District Doctor," there is a perceptible distance in the relationship between the doctor and the object of his affections. Is this a reflection of the traditional reserve doctors are supposed to maintain in their relationships with patients? Or is it a manifestation of the eternal loneliness in the Russian soul, portrayed so powerfully by Nikolai Gogol in "The Diary of a Madman"? What Russian writers are trying to tell us, perhaps, is that human beings are never really able to shatter their loneliness and that physicians, whatever their magic, are capable only of limited rescues.

In the English novel, the physician tends to be treated more as an institution than as a person. One thinks of Emily Brontë's description in *Wuthering Heights* of the physician whose professional detachment keeps him from becoming a vitally needed emotional resource for the patient. He is acting in the institutionalized way doctors are supposed to act. The physician whose towering sense of authority leads him to make arbitrary decisions is seldom better described than in Wilkie Collins's *Moonstone*. Thomas Hardy's Dr. Fitzpiers in *The Woodlanders* seems to feel his special station entitles him to exploit the affections of the heroine. Samuel Butler's observations about the institution of the doctor may be no more satirical than those of his contemporaries, but there is no mistaking the underlying resentments that are sometimes part of the physician's quixotic attitudes toward his patients.

What about the physician's vaunted heroic role? In all cultures, this role is as real as it is substantial. If the demigod concept is resisted by a minority of novelists, it is not because writers are

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EDITORIAL

unmindful of the exalted station of the doctor, but because novelists are merchants of paradox and searchers-afterwarts. It is inevitable that physicians, who supposedly possess life-and-death powers, should be so often idealized and ascribed with virtues equal to their authority. But the novelist is careful not to ignore the juxtapositions and contributions of character that make the physician credible.

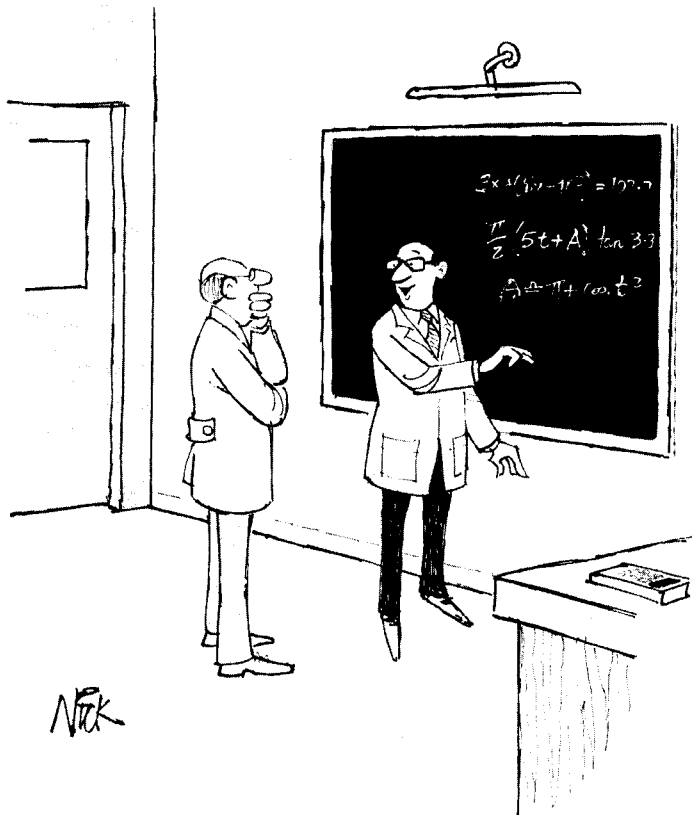
The writer's fascination with the physician is also evident in contemporary American fiction: Ernest Hemingway, in his short stories and novels, makes use of his special knowledge as a doctor's son. The loneliness and despair of the ill people in his books are in stark contrast to the lofty estate of the physician. The physician comes and goes at will; the patient remains immobile and in despair. William Faulkner's doctors are perhaps more philosophical than are Hemingway's. They look not just at illness but at life. In the same vein, John Steinbeck's Dr. Burton, from *In Dubious Battle*, manifests a curiosity not just about the workings of the human body but about society; he is thereby justified in addressing himself to the interaction between the two. Even when Steinbeck's doctors are erratic and deeply flawed, as in *Cannery Row*, they remain the rallying points for a surrounding humanity. Walker Percy, himself a doctor, sees the tragic human weaknesses in doctors, especially in his *Love in the Ruins*, but he also sees a vital human spark inherent in the physician that touches off life-giving energies and prospects.

Ring Lardner, chronicler of picturesque character and speech, portrays the physician not just as a mediator with death but as a protector of those who are easily gulled or made to look ridiculous in the eyes of their fellows.

It is doubtful if any writer has imparted a more epic quality to the physician than Boris Pasternak. Dr. Zhivago learns and grows from the suffering he has seen—at the bedside and on the battlefield. His experiences, far from making him indifferent to suffering, have enlarged his sensitivity and his view of life even as they helped connect him to the great events of his time. From *Dr. Zhivago* we learn that the physician is more than a scientist; he is a human being whose skill depends also on his knowledge of life.

What we learn from the world's great literature is that a knowledge of the elusive aspects of human uniqueness is no less important than a knowledge of medical science and technology in the combatting of disease. Writers are natural producers of anecdotes; it is their stock in trade. We absorb these anecdotes and learn from them. I now give a course in a medical school on the physician as perceived by the writer. Nothing is more interesting to me in that course than the willingness of students to take fictional anecdotes more seriously than they do examples from real life. Fictional illnesses tend to rescue them from the unfortunate trend in modern medicine to downplay or disregard real-life accounts of medical incidents because they are "anecdotal." An account of what appears to be a remarkable cure in a single case has little standing. Recommended new therapy must rest on a wide base of testing and experience. But even a single account of a patient-physician episode has educational value. It is translatable and transferable to general experience. When we read that a patient has gone into shock because of a physician's lack of artistry in conveying information, we cannot dismiss the account as "only an anecdote." It is all too easily replicated. We need only a single case as an example of what to avoid. The novelist, by focusing on individual incidents, helps to free the student from the overworked tendency to think statistically.

One has only to review the changes in medical science over the past century to recognize that medicine is an evolving field. What has not changed is the importance of the patient-physician relationship. The responsibility for creating and maintaining this relationship, by the nature of things, falls most heavily on the physician. And this is what is made clear in the world's legacy of literature. **—N.C.**



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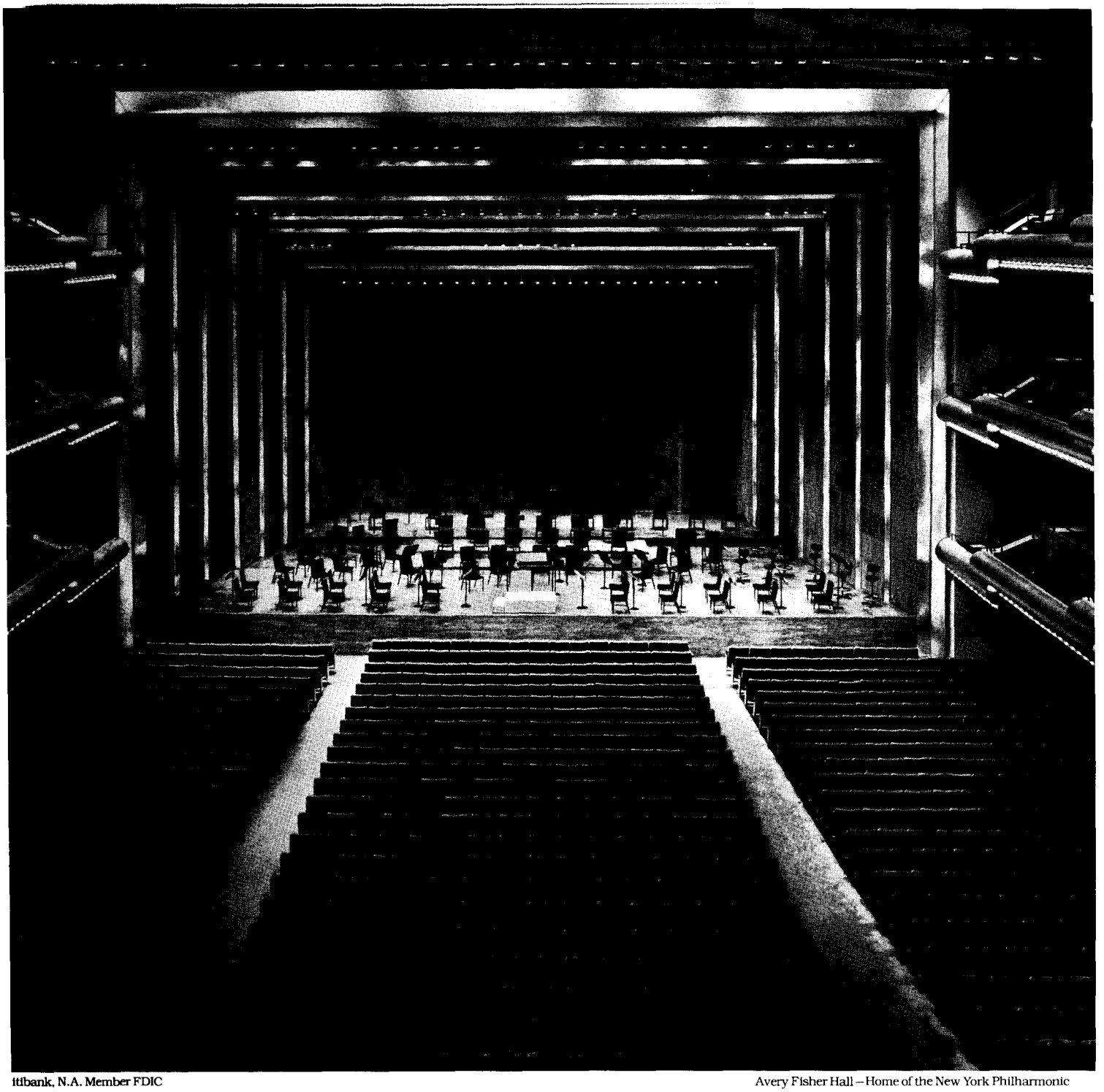

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FEBRUARY SPOTLIGHTS

The touring Royal Ballet of Flanders will offer a new ballet by Jiri Kylian.

Dance

Born in Czechoslovakia, **Jiri Kylian** has gained renown around the world as perhaps the most exciting choreographer of the younger generation—though, unfortunately his ballets have seldom been seen in this country. Any performance here of Kylian's work therefore commands attention. This February, and continuing through the spring, the youthful Royal Ballet of Flanders will be touring 33 eastern cities, from Ontario to New Orleans, featuring the American Premiere of Kylian's *La Cathédrale Engloutie* (The Sunken Cathedral), set to the ethereal (or perhaps more accurately, fluvial) music of Debussy.

These performances should whet American appetites for more of Kylian's work and prepare the way for his arrival this summer, when he will bring his own troupe, the Netherlands Dance Theater, to the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City for the company's second U.S. tour. In the meantime, if you live in an eastern city, watch for an announcement of the Belgian company's arrival.

Theater

Jane Lapotaire collected a sheaf of "Best Actress of the Year" awards in London last season for her emotional portrayal of the title role in **Piaf**. Pam Gems's play, studded with Lapotaire's renditions of Piaf songs, spanned 30 years of the chanteuse's life. The *New York Times* said of her West End performance, "Jane Lapotaire as Piaf transforms herself. This is not a case of mimicry but incarnation."

This month Lapotaire's version of "the little sparrow" arrives on Broadway. It is not, however, her American debut. She has been seen here acting the title role in the PBS/BBC-TV series, *Marie Curie*, and she visited New York with the Young Vic in *Scapino* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. (Opening February 5.)

Music

Rather like far-Eastern Menuhins, a rising family of young artists hits the concert stage in Los Angeles this month. The L.A. Philharmonic's associate conductor, **Myung-Whun Chung**, will lead his two sisters, violinist **Kyung-Wha Chung** and cellist **Myung-Wha Chung**, in a performance of the Brahms Double Concerto, Opus 102.

The *L.A. Times* said of Myung-Whun Chung: "Chung...has a rare gift for rehabilitation; he can take such...a piece as the *Symphony Fantastique* and revitalize it so vividly you tend to wonder if you ever really heard it before. He does this with a zest that seems utterly spontaneous."

Kyung-Wha Chung made her debut at the age of nine in her native Korea, playing the Mendelssohn concerto. In 1967, she pulled down a joint first prize with Pinchas Zukerman in the prestigious Leventritt Competition. Since then her world-wide concertizing has

Jane Lapotaire brings *Piaf* to Broadway.

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won her consistently high critical acclaim. She has made many appearances on television and was the subject of a special BBC documentary.

Recipient of a multitude of first prizes in musical competitions, Myung-Wha has appeared with orchestras throughout Europe and North America, and at the Lucerne, Flanders, and Spoleto Festivals. The family's joint performances are not uncommon, but they're usually special. (February 12, 13, 14, and 15.)

Myung-Wha Chung will perform with her family in L.A.

Art

Few people ever actually see earth-sculptor **Robert Smithson**'s most important work first-hand—unless they're willing to rent a jeep and drive to some deserted shore on Utah's Great Salt Lake; there they'll find his *Spiral Jetty*, 1,500 feet of mud, rocks, and salt crystals curling out into the saline waters. Or they might travel to an abandoned quarry in Emmen, Holland, to see his elegant sand-shaped *Broken Circle*. Or hire a plane and try to locate, somewhere in the Texas desert, his *Amarillo Ramp*, a slanted, circular 12-foot-high pile of rocks.

Fortunately, not all of Smithson's creations are so inaccessible; some can even fit inside a museum. The Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, will present the first comprehensive exhibition of Smithson's work since his untimely death in 1973. Accompanying films, slides, and photographs of his monumental earth works will be examples of his earlier sculptures in steel and glass, and drawings for fantastic projects. (February 8 to March 22.)

Opera

After the recent musicians' strike was settled, the **Metropolitan Opera** opened its present season with a concert performance of a Mahler symphony! This month, continuing its venturesome programming, the Met will offer a triple bill of one-acts that concentrate as much on ballet as on opera. The evening will begin with *Parade*, music by Erik Satie and choreography by Leonide Massine to a scenario by Jean Cocteau. The Cubist ballet is as silly as it is enjoyable. And its surrealistic, fantastic quality is neatly echoed by the other works on the program: Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, to a libretto by Colette, about a child's anthropomorphic world that gets out of hand; and Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*, to a libretto by Apollinaire, about a man who changes gender with his wife and produces 40,000 offspring before returning to his original sex.

Stuart Sebastian, the rising young choreographer who created the popular "Skating Ballet" in *Le Prophete*, will choreograph *L'Enfant* and *Les Mamelles*. Manuel Rosenthal, in his Met debut, will conduct. Catherine Malfitano, David Holloway, and Allan Monk will sing in *Les Mamelles*; Hilda Harris will sing the child in *L'Enfant*. (Benefit premiere, February 20.)

Minneapolis will host a major Smithson retrospective. Above: "The Spiral Jetty."

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Art Stars for the Eighties

by Carter Ratcliff

Several years ago, the financial pages of the *New York Times* reported that investment counselors were steering some of their major clients into art and antiques. An authenticated canvas by a pre-modern master was said to be just about as good an inflation hedge as an equivalent dollar-amount in diamonds. Of course, the cautious voices went on, much stress must be laid on the word *authenticated*.... It was part of an art boom whose rumbles are now louder than ever. And echoes can be heard in the neighborhood branches of some Manhattan banks, where a recent PR throwaway enticed customers with advice on "Art for Investment's Sake." Nowadays, even the college kid is invited to consider "collectables" as a safe place to tuck away surplus funds.

Nor is the art boom simply a reflex triggered by the dollar's shrinkage. The audience for painting and sculpture of all periods and persuasions is growing annually. Art-bureaucrats in New York are fond of pointing to a survey done by Yankelovich, Skelly and White in 1975, which indicates that the city's museum exhibitions generate more economic activity every year than the area's sporting events. This may reflect the trials and tribulations of the Jets, the Mets, and nearly every other local team (excepting, of course, the Yankees), yet it's a phenomenon reported nationwide. During King Tut's four-month stay at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 1978 and 1979, local business experienced a windfall of almost $70 million in increased sales. Art is a major entertainment draw. As a result, many artists aspire to celebrity status, and some have begun to promote themselves in a manner reminiscent of chorus-line hopefuls in Busby Berkeley movies.

Careerism of this sort was unimaginable 30 years ago, when Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and other founders of the New York School thought of themselves—with much justification—as pioneers struggling for survival in a cultural wilderness. In those days, perhaps six Manhattan galleries showed adventurous contemporary art. There are hundreds now, and the leading establishments are offered more than 5,000 sets of newcomers' slides to peruse every season. With Jasper Johns's "Three Flags" of 1958 fetching $1,000,000 at auction, the parade of would-be Johnses has turned into a stampede. And of course more and more star-pickers line the stampede route every season.

This route leads directly to the art-gallery scene, an arena where the struggle for stardom meets the struggle against inflation. Young artists, primed by art schools's often starry-eyed vision of the modernist past, are faced with a market voracious for new styles and new looks. Critics are as avid for novelty as dealers, perhaps more so. There is a strong temptation to make art by reshuffling the latest style-options. In the process, winners—artists and dealers alike—sometimes emerge. Even art itself benefits, now and then.

The art scene has been called, sometimes disparagingly, sometimes despairingly, a fashion show where hype prevails over matters of aesthetic value. But the picture is not nearly so one-sided. The market may threaten commercial seduction, but it can also offer occasion for integrity. And that option, too, is widely exercised. While new styles are constantly generated, earlier ones are not abandoned.

Despite the vagaries of commercial and critical success, every development of postwar America is currently continuing along its own path. Some founders of the Abstract Expressionist New York School are at present doing major work, so it's only to be expected that the second generation is still going strong in all its variety. Pop, Minimalism, colorfield painting, California funk, the oddity of the Chicago School—all this and much more thrives. Earthworkers have produced a second generation, while Conceptualism's family tree is so tangled critics can hardly distinguish one generation from the next. Given the economy's pressures on the fine arts, there doesn't seem much point in condemning the resulting stylish pluralism. The individual must struggle against its unappeasable appetite much as artists of 30 years ago struggled against indifference.

Some of the last 10 years' most interesting work has been a response to the art boom and its dangers. As in the jungle, so in the art world—threat inspires either fight or flight. Three of the newest trends, the so-called New Image art, the ebullient pattern and decoration painting (P&D for short), and the sardonic New Wave or "punk" art, exemplify this response.

Susan Rothenberg is one of the New Image painters whose flight from art-world pressures has produced a militantly private style. In a far from unwelcome twist of irony, her work has turned out to be highly marketable. Rothenberg was born in 1945 and raised in Buffalo. Moving to New York City when she was 24, she began to attract attention in the 1974-75 season with largish paintings of horses against blank backgrounds. Rather, the horses appear in deliberately clunky outline (sometimes silhouette) against a monochrome field scratched and scumbled to a state of textural lushness. Thin lines measure off the horse-form with severe hints of a grid pattern. Or, if the creature has four hooves raised in a gallop, the lines might crisscross its body with a big, free-floating X. It was the unabashed oddness of these paintings that first drew critical notice.

On one hand, there was the richness of their single-color surfaces, which seemed to be a play on the possibilities of Minimalist painting. On the other, there were these—well, these *horses*. What were *they* doing, taking up so much room

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Susan Rothenberg's New Image paintings seem to bear some charge of private meaning. Yet others are drawn to them, as if to half-remembered totems of another time.

in what looked in all other respects like perfectly acceptable abstract paintings? Their function, in part, was to blur the heavy line most of us draw between abstract and figurative art. That done, Rothenberg could get on with making images in a personal realm untouched by those stylistic categories the market maintains for its own purposes.

Rothenberg's horses have another purpose that is harder to pin down. They seem to bear some charge of private meaning for her, and not for her alone. Others are drawn to these mysterious creatures, as if to half-remembered totems of another time. The artist's most recent paintings show quasi-human forms that are, if anything, still more enigmatic. And the smudged whites, the foggy blacks, of her earlier canvases have become much starker. Rothenberg gets less compromising, more hermetic, by the year. This improves her market, ironically enough—or perhaps that's only natural in an era bombarded by images of an all-too-accessible kind.

At any rate, Rothenberg refuses to budge from those recesses of her consciousness where she dwells with the offspring of her imagination. Her deeply private art is eased into public view by New York City's Willard Gallery, which represents Rothenberg and other New Image painters. At her last solo show, Rothenberg's paintings went for $6-$15,000. Her new work, to be exhibited this April, is expected to command much higher prices. With Rothenberg and others, Willard's job is in part to buffer sensibilities which, even with commercial success, remain easily bruised.

Thirty-one-year-old Robert Kushner presents New York's Holly Solomon Gallery with a very different task. Tagged a pattern painter, he is one of the liveliest of that flamboyant group. This puts him at the forefront of a still-continuing swing toward decorative art that began to gather steam about the time of Kushner's first one-man show at Solomon, which took place in 1976. The P&D bandwagon is still going strong, which means it still provides museums and galleries with a ready-made theme for group exhibitions. Kushner, naturally, is invited to participate in all of them.

Hailing from southern California, Kushner spent a few years in Boston pursuing an interest in performance art before coming to New York City in 1973. He occasionally permits his big, splashy paintings to spin off designs for hats and cape-like garments. Kushner is constantly on the move, so his gallery has to manage him, much as an agent manages a performer. Prices for his work range between $2-$6,000 for his designs on paper and up to $20,000 for his large-scale pieces on fabric.

His art begins with a broken taboo—modernism's fanatic strictures against decoration. The turn-of-the-century architect Alfred Loos put it most simply: Ornament, he said, is a crime. That attitude gave us glass-and-steel buildings, the purities of Mondrian and the willful unprettiness of Pollock's drip paintings. Now, Kushner has a keen eye for the modernist past. Much of his recent paintings reach across the wall for 20 feet, with a brashness that owes much to the precedent of Pollack and other New York School heavies. (continued)

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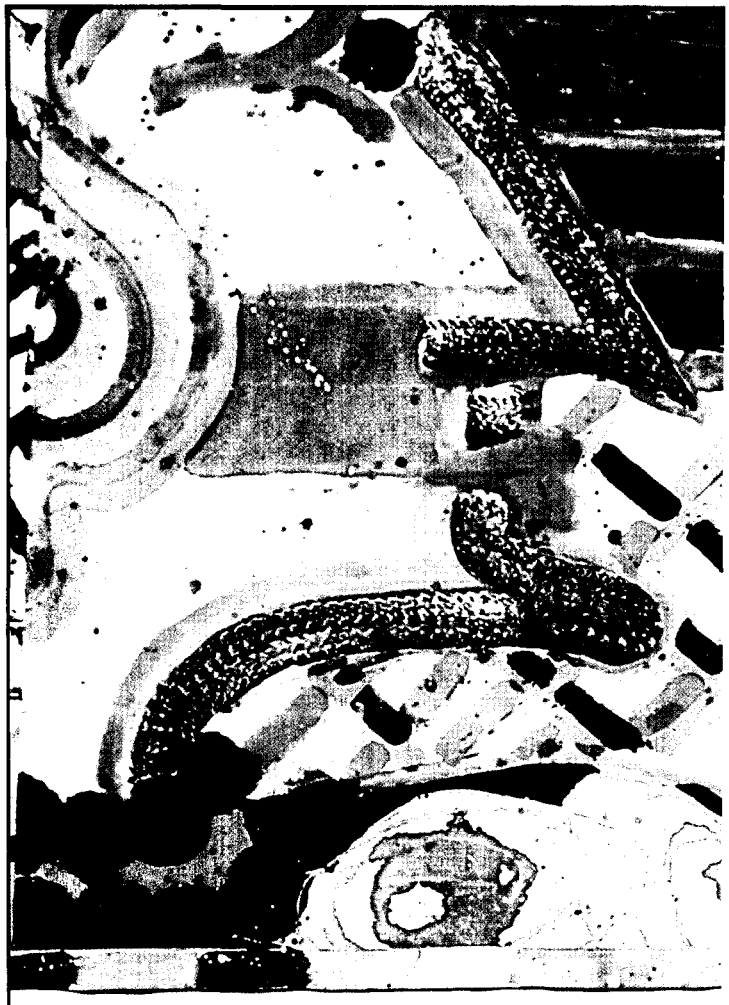
Robert Kushner's art begins with a broken taboo—modernism's fanatic strictures against decoration. But collectors take his large-scale playfulness very seriously.

Postwar American artists put sheer bigness on the aesthetic map. They also insisted on a seriousness that often borders on solemnity. Kushner's hot pinks and magentas, his waving palm fronds and zappy arabesques want no part of that.

In the last few seasons, figures have started to appear in his works—lushly made-up women who radiate an air of slightly frantic elegance. In large paintings, they appear in rows, each a near-clone of all the rest. These figures breathe an air of artifice, which is intensified when, for example, flounces of taffeta appear below their waists to suggest the skirts of a chorus of opera singers. Kushner wants his art to be witty, vivid, and accessible. When questions arise, he'll opt for excess—and results usually open up new territory for P&D.

Puritan attitudes have deep roots, especially in America, so anti-decorative forces are still strong in art circles. The standard objection to pattern and decoration is that it's just what the name claims, and no more. Hence it is not really art. And yet Kushner tells a story of a meeting he once had with a vice-president of a major textile manufacturing corporation. The executive liked some of the artist's stuff, but he just couldn't see why he should pay gallery prices for it. The company's own design department could produce patterns just as good, in his eyes, as anything Kushner had shown him. The moral of the story is that P&D is too self-conscious in its use of commercial sources to qualify as low art. It simply wouldn't work as bed sheets and wallpaper. Therefore it's high art, at least in the eyes of those collectors, critics, and curators who have granted P&D a full measure of respect. Kushner's admirers take his large-scale playfulness very seriously—without getting solemn about it, of course.



The Seventies have come to be known as the pluralistic decade. Just about every modernist, anti-modernist, and post-modernist tendency was at work in some corner of the American art world. There is no reason to suppose that the Eighties will be any more orderly. While the New Image painters exchange public chaos for private enigma, Kushner and the rest of the pattern painters plunge into the moment's crosscurrents, hoping to come up with artworks both sophisticated and accessible—at any rate, vivacious. Another, more recently spotted group of young artists takes a different view of the current state of the culture. They're called New Wave, in part because their imagery has qualities in common with New Wave music, and also because some of these artists perform in punk rock bands.

Twenty-seven-year-old Robert Longo is forming his own musical group, while carrying on with visual art in at least four media—drawing, sculpture, film, and performance. This last, a hybrid of happenings and dance, leads back to music. Like a number of New Wave artists, Longo's sensibility travels a complex circuit. Along the way, an astonishing range of images is appropriated, recreated, and sent back out into the world. For instance, a TV shot of rioting Iranian students becomes a drawing, which becomes a nearly flat slab of modeled clay. Cast in aluminum, the slab turns the students into anonymous figures. They may be sinking under the surface or they may be emerging from it—but they are super-charged with the most threatening urban energies.

Longo, New York City born and bred, neither celebrates nor condemns that threat. The anonymity of his images reflects the impersonality with which he transforms them.

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The results are often chillingly ambiguous. Longo's *Men in the Cities* is a series of large charcoal and graphite drawings. Each panel shows a young man in an agitated pose. With his narrow tie and lapels, he might be dancing at a rock club where the styles of the Fifties are enjoying a sardonic revival. Or, the viewer suddenly realizes, the man may have been shot—the contortion of a dance step becomes the spasm of a mortal wound. Longo's point is not that dancing is the same as being assassinated. Rather, he suggests that it may be difficult for us to distinguish between pictures of the two events. He gives aesthetic form to uncertainties forced on us without respite by the culture's barrage of imagery.

The last two seasons, a number of New York galleries have been drawn into the currents of the New Wave. (continued)

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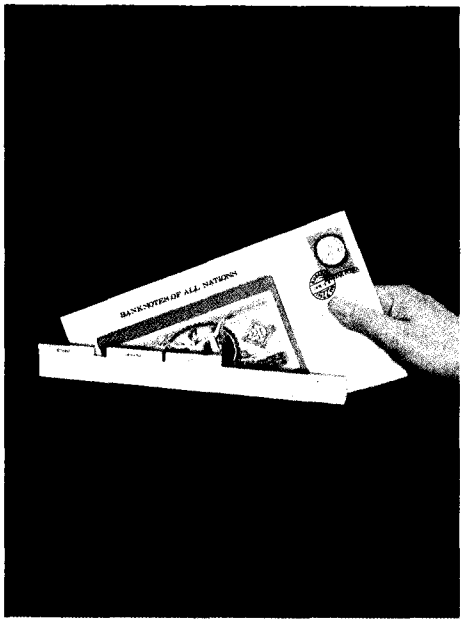

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FRANÇOIS BOTA

Are Robert Longo's figures dancing—or have they been shot? He gives chillingly ambiguous form to the uncertainties forced on us by our culture's steady barrage of media imagery.

After participating in group shows at nearly all of them, Longo is now affiliated with Metro Pictures, a new gallery dedicated exclusively to this new, often harsh sensibility. Longo's larger drawings will fetch in the neighborhood of $4,000. His smaller sculptures now go for about $2,000, his larger works will bring in something close to $7,500.

Metro opened this fall with a selection of works by its entire roster. Longo's entry was "The Fall," a high-relief sculpture that shows the upper half of a helmeted man emerging from a tall black slab. In a reminiscence of Art Deco's severe side, the central slab is flanked on both sides by two narrower red ones.

The man in the sculpture shines with the impeccable, satiny gloss of the surface from which he emerges. He seems to consist of cast and polished metal, or perhaps he is made of lacquer-coated wood. This difficulty in deciding whether the object is wood or metal leaves the viewer with the feeling that it's hardly an object at all. One can check the wall label, and yet for the practical purposes of aesthetic contemplation, "The Fall" is unalloyed visual spectacle—sheer image. And so the helmeted man may be crashing to earth or leaping down from ambush. Or perhaps he's a motorcyclist, heading for a thud. Once again, the power lies in the ambiguity.

Longo's falling man looks threatening at first, yet continued looking shows how vulnerable he is. Frozen in mid-fall, he drifts beyond our capacity to understand anything about him. Maybe he's an allegorical figure of the individual in a time of media-overload, when people often float by like the after-images of events lost in the flux of current happenings. Longo's art originates in a paradox—he is extremely sensitive to the desensitizing effects of a culture that seems to reduce us to a pattern of quickly scanned cues.

At eight feet high, "The Fall" is a monument to that reductive process. Rather, it is a monumental attempt to alert us to its consequences. The best of the New Wave newcomers make that effort, though it is sometimes difficult to detect, thanks to the harsh and chilly surfaces of their art. Those are uningratiating traits, yet they're basic to stances which, like Longo's, challenge our sense of ourselves, of our culture at large. Everyone complains about depersonalization. Longo, a connoisseur of that desperate state, shows how to stamp it with a—possibly redeeming— singularity.

Daily, the world exerts a numbing assortment of pressures on the imagination. News, instant analysis, advertising, fad and fashion—these are taken in overdose or not at all, though most of us are only subliminally aware of our intake. There is art to be made by bringing such pressures to light, as Longo does when he shifts the very mechanics of image-making into an aesthetic mode. Robert Kushner and the pattern painters don't try to reveal the gears of pluralism so much as rev up the machine's gyrations to an entrancing blur. Susan Rothenberg and others in the New Image group look the most like traditional artists, as they flee public chaos for a realm of private safety. New Image, P&D, visual punk—these developments appear with the speed of fashion. Yet they count as art because even at Longo's New Wave extremes they require us to respond as singular selves, not as functions of social and economic forces. ■

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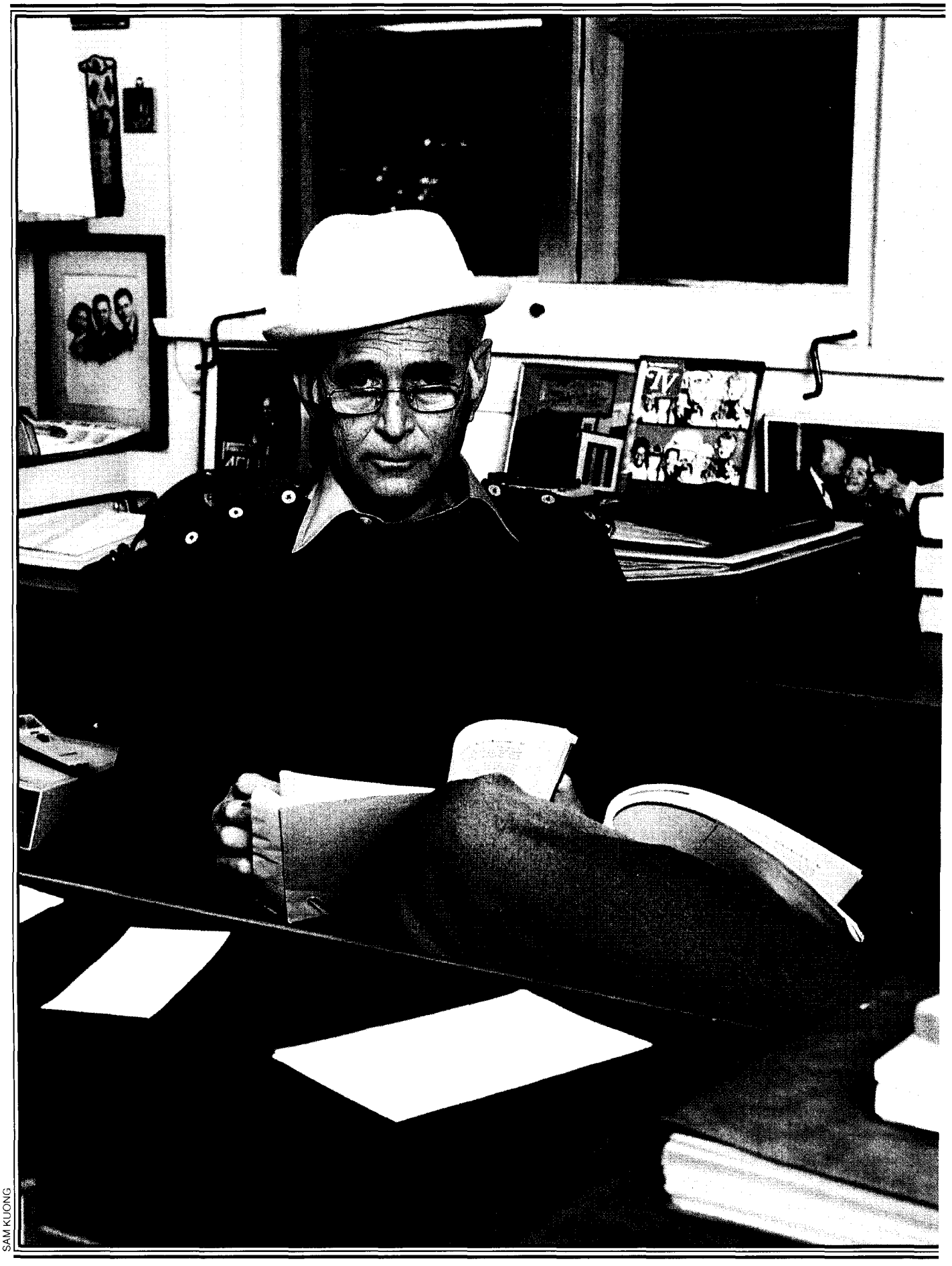

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Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority

The War to Clean Up TV

by Ben Stein

A battle is raging for control of network television. Storming the citadel of imperial TV power is the new Christian right, allied with the new political right, and its spearhead political-action commando group, the Moral Majority. They have vowed to clean up the moral swamp of contemporary television programming. Says Tim Lahaye, top adviser of the Moral Majority, "A medium that once featured family-oriented programming now makes jokes about homosexuality, incest, wife-swapping, and depravity." It's not only immoral, he argues, "but anti-Christian."

Standing at the battlements is a phalanx of traditional religious leaders, the television establishment of networks, producers, and station owners; and at its head the towering paradigm of American media, television and movie tycoon and emerging political leader, Norman Lear. Lear, who launched two-dozen sit-coms and changed the face of television comedy, is serious about the Moral Majority. He says he resents the new Christian right's implication that its positions constitute the "revealed word of God." "I'll fight that way of thinking. I don't want a narrow band of people controlling American politics or what's on television."

This narrow band numbers an estimated 30 million militant Christians. Their movement is headed by the likes of Pat Robertson, James Robison (on the Christian side), Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie (on the political side), and most prominent of all, leader of the Moral Majority, prayer-warrior on 400 stations with 15 million viewers every Sunday, the Reverend Jerry Falwell. He and his followers have been mobilized in anger toward abortion, divorce, child abuse, drugs, deficit spending, low defense budgets, weakness toward communism, the Department of Education, and a host of issues that represent to them a lax and Godless America.

Lear and and his allies are upset because they know this isn't just empty preaching. They've seen how influential this new Christian militia can be. A few years ago, before the Christian Roundtable, the Christian Voice, the *Old Time Gospel Hour*, the Moral Majority with its computers, and the amalgamation of political and church reactionary radicalism, names like Birch Bayh, George McGovern, John Culver, and Frank Church seemed like permanent fixtures on the American political scene. Then the Moral Majority targeted them for defeat, drawing on its tremendous financial and polemical resources for a media blitz endorsing their conservative opponents and identifying them as "ungodly." No doubt these senators were victims of the general conservative swing last November. Still, George Cunningham, McGovern's administrative assistant, weighs the Moral Majority's contribution as considerable. "They're frighteningly effective," he says. "They can do anything unless someone stops them."

Says Norman Lear, "I'll fight. I don't want a narrow band of people controlling American politics or what's on television."

Now the Moral Majority is planning boycotts of sponsors of offensive shows, and its leaders are talking quietly among themselves about making a bid for a controlling interest in one of the three big networks. What they want to do is to scourge from television everything that they consider an abomination in the eyes of God. The Evangelicals are disgusted by seeing homosexuals treated as acceptable jokes (*Too Close for Comfort*), abortions and incest treated as acceptable (*Maude* and *Soap* respectively), extramarital sex presented as cute (*All's Fair*, *Mary Hartman*, *Soap*, *Three's Company*, *Family*, *Secrets of Midland Heights*, *Dallas*, and a hundred others), soap operas awash in sex (again, too numerous to mention), divorce as inconsequential (ditto), and narcotic drugs pushed as socially desirable (*Saturday Night Live*, *Fridays*). Jerry Falwell, D.D., pastor of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia, and his allies, flushed with victory in the November elections, are determined to put some Christian rigor into television.

Television today is a far cry from the days of *F Troop* or *Your Show of Shows*. Since the early Seventies, when Norman Lear and CBS first aired *All in the Family*, television has been casting off the restraints that once characterized the business. Where Robert Young once wisely counseled his daughter about kindness to new girls in school, Ted Knight now screams at his daughter about working semi-nude in a bar—and the mother says it's fine. Where any mention of race was once verboten, Carroll O'Connor routinely

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calls people spics and hebes. Teenage girls who were at home helping Mom with the ironing on *The Partridge Family* are now out hooking on Eighth Avenue, their veins filled with heroin.

Many television producers feel that liberalization improved television. Certainly, some of the episodes of *Mary Hartman, All in the Family*, or *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which reached the highest levels of TV art, would have been impossible in 1959. But equally certainly, once Fred Silverman got onto the formula of teenage prostitutes, veritable striptease on TV, and endless bump, grind, and jiggle, television concentrated on the maximum amount of titillation the censors would allow, rarely bothering with "redeeming social values." It was inevitable that a great many people would get angry and that they would find a vehicle to express their anger. The Moral Majority is that vehicle.

Norman Lear is deeply concerned and committed to fending off this onslaught. For many years a middling successful movie producer—*Cold Turkey, Divorce American Style*—he became one of the major tycoons in media history with *All in the Family*. Lear is retired from the nearly 2,000 half-hour shows produced under his active supervision, but his company owns eight prime-time shows, many cable systems, a great deal of stock in movie companies, including Twentieth-Century Fox, Columbia Pictures, Filmways, and other good things.

Lear now concentrates on motion pictures (he has two in development), collecting modern art, and putting his energies to work on his social concerns. He is a one-man center for support of liberal causes. The presidential campaign of John Anderson would have been hard-pressed without Lear's support. Lear is one of the largest living donors to the American Civil Liberties Union and an important supporter of Ralph Nader's activities and those of the Constitutional Rights Foundation.

Long before Falwell turned his guns on TV, Lear had become deeply concerned about the burgeoning power of the combined new Christian right and new political right. Last fall, he and a group of citizens, including Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame, Charles Bergstrom of the Lutheran Church, and Iowa's former Senator Harold Hughes, now an Evangelical minister himself, founded People for the American Way. Their aim was to combat the work of the politically committed Evangelicals that they saw as endangering the separation of church from other areas of American life. PAW aired three anti-Moral Majority commercials. In one, an actor complains "There's got to be something wrong when anyone, even a preacher, suggests you are a good Christian or a bad Christian depending on your political point of view. That's not the American way."

But Lear and his group have not addressed the question of whether television is undermining the moral foundations of our society. TV, Falwell points out, is crammed with "sexual permissiveness, situational ethics, and outright obscenity."

"America has turned toward humanism," says Falwell, "the wisdom of man, as opposed to Godliness, the wisdom of God, as revealed in the Bible." Humanists cluster in universities, the governments, foundations (the Aspen Institute is the archest of enemies), and in the media. Within the media, the most powerful organ of the humanists —who favor abortion, disarmament, drugs, busing, and moral decay according to Falwell—is commercial television. It was only natural, then, that on December 3, 1980, Falwell and his closest associates met in Lynchburg and drafted a statement of Falwell's next project after his success with Congress: cleaning up TV.

In his statement, Falwell said that his Moral Majority was beginning to form a large national coalition to reverse the trend on television. The new group will not attack specific shows until it has taken a national poll to determine which shows are "most obnoxious" to viewers. After that step, Falwell's new group will contact producers, networks, and sponsors to ask for changes to pro-family, pro-life (anti-abortion), pro-Godly shows. Falwell says that he hopes a boycott will not be necessary, but that if it is, he will reluctantly call for national boycotts of products advertised by sponsors of humanist shows.

Would advertisers ever knuckle under to a boycott, withdraw their sponsorship, insist on programmatic changes, on a more Christian form of programming? While an official of BBD&O, one of America's largest advertising agencies, insists that advertisers will *now* insist that they cannot be

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WIDE WORLD

Reverend Jerry Falwell: TV has led America away from "the wisdom of God, as revealed in the Bible."

boycotted into subservience, they deeply fear such a consumer action. "Remember," the advertiser said, "it only takes a percentage point or two of shift in the retail sales of washing machines or K-cars to make a tremendous difference in profits. If push came to shove, the advertisers would lean on the producers to make sure that the boycott ended fast."

An executive of ABC offered the same message. "We will always deny that we can be boycotted successfully," she said. "If word gets around that we can be boycotted, everyone in town will start boycotting us for every cause under the sun. But if a boycott by a few million people were ever successful, it would shake up the programmers a lot. They'd be putting dresses on the girls in bikinis in a hurry." And the smaller affiliates are much more vulnerable to special-interest groups. Even if the big boys could withstand the pressure, with the local stations caving in one by one, they might soon find themselves with no outlets on which to air their shows.

But boycotts are only the beginning of Falwell's plans for television. According to a top California official of the Moral Majority, Falwell's ultimate goal is to actually buy a controlling interest in a network. "It's an ambitious goal," the aide says cheerfully, "but we've never believed in thinking small." Falwell wants a network, as opposed to simply changing program content, "because we have to change the kind of coverage that the network news gives to issues. We're sick of the humanistic bias on the news. There's too much in favor of abortion, too much about evolution and nothing about Creation. We want a nightly network news show which will let people know that they should place their reliance in God, and not in man as an animal."

According to the same aide, Falwell would get the hundreds of millions necessary for such a purchase from "the many very wealthy people who support our way of thinking." Oil billionaires Nelson and Bunker Hunt and T. Cullen Davis were specifically named as people who would make funds available for the take-over bid.

But could wealthy oilmen like the Hunts or Davis actually buy control of a network? "It's a longshot," says Steve van Brunt, an executive of Merrill Lynch's Beverly Hills office. "But it could happen. They could buy effective control of ABC for $150 million if the institutional holders went along—which they might if there was a lot of national heat for them not to fight the Evangelicals. And remember that it wouldn't be a loss for the Hunts or Davis. They'd own a valuable asset that would pay them dividends. It wouldn't

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Television art—or Godless abominations? From left: *All in the Family*, *The Jeffersons*, *One Day at a Time*, *Maude*.

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be as if they put the money in the collection plate and never saw it again. It's a long, long shot, but there have been stranger corporate takeovers," van Brunt said.

Marilyn Gross, a financial consultant in Los Angeles, adds that if the Hunts or T. Cullen Davis even *began* to buy blocks of network stock, they would send shivers down the spine of the top management. "People don't like to lose their jobs," she said. "They'd start tacking into the wind, cleaning up the shows to preempt the takeover."

The Christian Broadcasting System? It may sound unlikely to you, but ask ex-Senator McGovern how unlikely it sounds to him.

It does not sound unlikely at all to Norman Lear or to the mainstream church leaders on the board of PAW. They were already deeply troubled by the sight of TV preachers telling viewers that they would be un-Christian and ungodly if they didn't hew to the ministers' positions about a number of key political and social issues. They were further alarmed at the prospect of TV coming under the aegis of the new Christian right. Now, the Hollywood production community is worried, too. Lee Rich, head of Lorimar, the producer of *The Waltons*, *Secrets of Midland Heights*, and *Dallas* (the highest rated show in TV history), says that "for any group to tell viewers what to watch is a violation of the Bill of Rights. Where does it stop? Will they tell us what neighborhoods we can live in? They're threatening to take away the livelihood of everyone who works on a show they don't like." Even Garry Marshall, one of the most relaxed of producers (*Mork and Mindy*, *Happy Days*, *Laverne and Shirley*) is concerned. "I'm so sick of pressure groups," he says. "I wish they'd just stop bothering me."

But, as might be expected, the most serious opposition to the new Christian right's forthcoming assault on TV comes from Lear. Lear agrees that television, along with other American big business, has a poor sense of morality. He talks about the major chemical companies dumping toxic wastes all over the landscape. "TV is dumping its toxic wastes, too. We sell jeans with tush and crotch shots in commercials. And we even use 15-year-olds to do it." But Lear says that he cannot definitively comment on much of the entertainment side "because I simply do not watch enough TV to say," which is perhaps the most devastating indirect comment he could make. When the busman uses trains, he may be telling us how safe buses are.

Could the Moral Majority actually take over a TV network? "They could buy effective control of ABC for $150 million."

In addition, Lear says he does not want "a narrow band" of Falwellians controlling American politics or American television; but the major flaw in this argument is that a "narrow band" of network executives and TV producers control American TV *right now*. Their parochialism is one of whispered TV traditions and Nielsen ratings, but it is hardly less narrow than the Bible.

A writer once sold to a TV producer a concept about a generous owner of a small manufacturing company. It came back completely revised, the hero now a villain. He was advised that in TV, businessmen can never be heroes. Another of his story proposals, about a heroic college professor, was turned down by a couple of Hollywood eminences as a complete impossibility. Everyone knew, they said, that professors are either crazy or fags.

So there we are, in the midst of two warring parochialisms, Lear arguing with Falwell as Falwell beckons to the American people to radically change TV. Who is right? Should either side stop arguing? It seems obvious that in a free society, people should have the right to tell others what is a sin or un-Christian. To deny that right would be an outrage against the Constitution. Just as clearly Lear and the PAW have the right to tell Americans that they should not be bullied by a group of latter-day Cotton Mathers. In a democracy, people often disagree. There will always be tension between and among competing groups in a free society.

But that leaves a nagging question. If, after all the arguing, Falwell and his allies assemble the power to change television, should they succeed? Is TV in need of a Falwellian housecleaning? Is it killing the American soul?

The clear answer to that is that current television seems to contribute little that is useful except to the pocketbooks of those involved. It has been shown to lower scholastic achievement, encour-

All in the Family **led a "narrow band" of programmers to give us such series as** ***Good Times*** **(left) and** ***Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*****. Now, a "narrow band" of Evangelicals wants such shows suppressed.**

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age violence, generate lassitude, and paint a wildly untrue and distorted picture of American life. That much is certain. But whether it harms the human soul is an extremely difficult proposition to prove or disprove.

Since it is unclear who on this earth understands the human soul, it is dangerous to delegate to anyone the control of TV because he or she claims such knowledge. Authority derived by reference to such abstractions, unknown and unknowable, leads to Christian republics and American Khomeinis. *Three's Company* is bad, but an Ayatollah for television would be far worse.

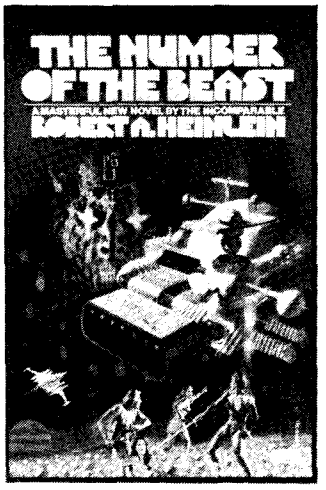
To many people, however, *the* problem with TV is that it is so unwatchably, unbearably uncreative, simpleminded, boring, and insulting to the good sense of the viewer. Seemingly, television gets more repetitious, imitative, and inane every year. The few *All in the Families*, *Mary Hartmans*, *Rockfords*, and *Mary Tyler Moores* vanish, and nothing comparable takes their place.

Where is the leader who will rise up from the anguish of Americans and put some dramatic decency into commercial television before it becomes cartoons with groans and oinks? It won't be Falwell. His *Old-Time Gospel Hour* offers only low-key, homogenized religious Muzak, without even the flair of Billy Graham or Oral Roberts.

Lear apparently *realizes* what has to be done to change television. "We have to do what we think is wonderful," he says, "not what we think will get good ratings. We have to go with our own viscera, rather than guessing what the American people will want." But his efforts to put his ideas to work are limited. He is producing a cable show called *Sharing*, about women's problems, "without psychological balderdash," and a children's show called *No Adults Allowed* featuring children acting out real-life stories. While these may turn out to be fine shows, they hardly represent the drastic efforts necessary to turn television around. So Lear may not be the leader either, which leaves us with TV as a creative sludge pit.

Meanwhile, the struggle between Falwell's crusaders and Lear's Hollywood infidels goes on. Stay tuned. ■

Ben Stein writes novels, screenplays, and articles. His forthcoming book is titled *Bunkhouse Logic: How to Bet on Yourself and Win.*



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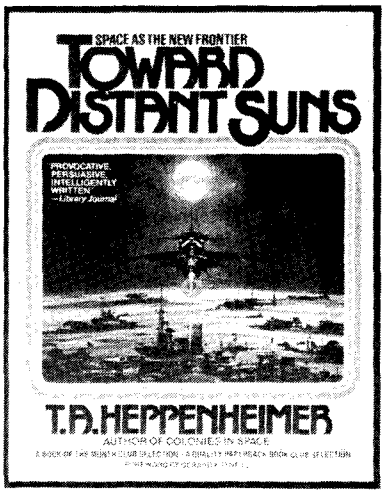

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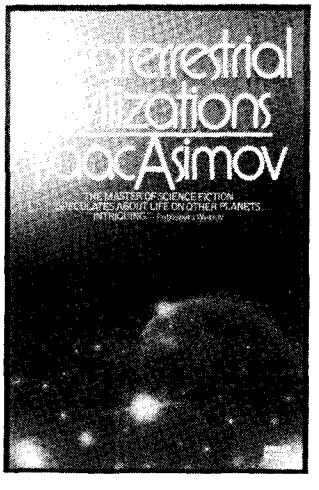

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Should Edward Albee Call It Quits?

by Roger Copeland

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Rarely has a theatrical career begun more promisingly, especially in America. The year was 1960. The play, *The Zoo Story*. The author, Edward Albee. Two years later, at the age of 34, Albee seemed to make good on that promise by writing a play which many critics felt begged comparison with Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. This was Albee's long night's journey into day, otherwise known as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

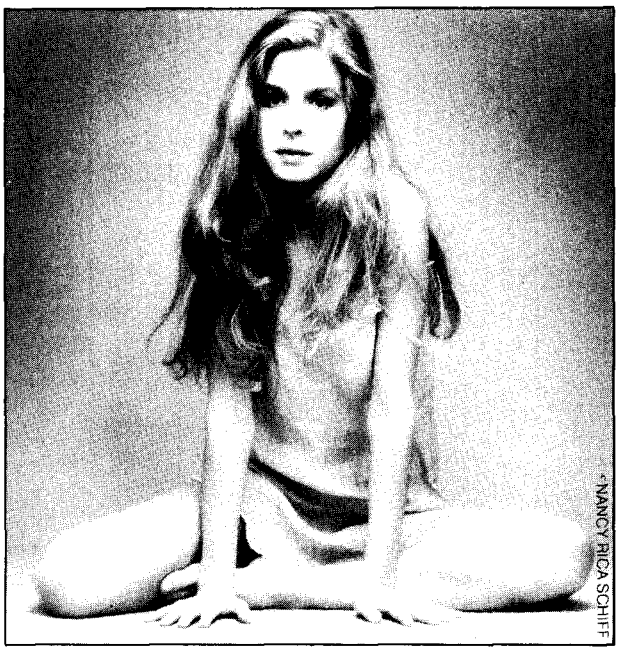
Then something peculiar happened: Albee began devoting substantial amounts of time and energy to adaptations of other writers' works. First, an unstageworthy version of Carson McCullers's novella, *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* (1963). Then a disaster called *Malcolm* (1966), adapted from a novel by James Purdy. Next, a thoroughly undistinguished reworking of a not-very-promising British play by Giles Cooper called *Everything in the Garden* (1967).

And even while Albee seemed to be growing more dependent on other writers for inspiration, his original plays were similarly received ever more coolly. Critics began suggesting that perhaps the emperor had no clothes. The least sympathetic voices began asking: Why does he bother continuing?

But Albee, apparently, remains undeterred: His newest play, scheduled to open on Broadway late this month, is yet another adaptation, this time of Vladimir Nabokov's great novel *Lolita*. Indeed, Albee maintains that the distinction between "original" plays and "adaptations" is at best one of degree rather than kind: "Everything's an adaptation," says Albee. "The only real difference is what it's an adaptation of... adaptation of the conscious from the unconscious or the adapting and patterning of opinions and facts that one has been accumulating in one's head. Everyone adapts stylistically, thematically, psychologically, and philosophically from everything that he's experienced in the arts before him."

Albee won't say much about his specific approach to *Lolita*; but he contends that "I wrote this adaptation the way Nabokov would have written it had he been me. People who know the novel well have read the script and they can't tell where Nabokov starts and I stop. I hope it all seems like Nabokov and all seems like me at the same time... [but] anybody who goes to see this play humming 'hits' from the book is approaching it the wrong way. People must be willing to experience it on its own terms."

The cast includes film star Donald Sutherland as Humbert Humbert, Carroll Baker's daughter Blanche as Lolita, and British actor Ian Richardson as a narrator and surrogate for authors Albee and Nabokov known as "A Certain Gentleman." If nothing else, the production promises to be controversial. An organization titled Women Against Pornography has already threatened legal action against the producer if he insists on casting any minors in the production. (Blanche Baker is 24.) Twenty-three years after the initial publication of *Lolita* in this country, the story itself still retains the power to shock.



After 23 years, Nabokov's novel, *Lolita*, can still shock. Will Blanche Baker as Albee's Lolita have similar impact?

How much Broadway audiences will be shocked remains to be seen. Few scripts travel intact from first rehearsal to opening night (though Albee is reputed to resist pleas for rewriting). But for the record, his original script called for nothing more graphic than tableaux Broadway has witnessed before (Lolita's naked backside; Humbert Humbert later urging Lolita's head toward his—clothed—lap). What seemed more likely to provoke critical disapproval was the play's single-minded concentration on Humbert's antisocial lust (Nabokov's complex novel is equally concerned, for instance, with Fifties American culture) and lines that could be viewed as Albee's embarrassment over his source material ("A Certain Gentleman" apologizes for plot twists and acknowledges a personal distaste for Humbert).

Still, even if *Lolita* succeeds on Broadway (for whatever reasons), can it possibly redeem Albee's badly tarnished reputation? It's worth remembering that *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* opened on Broadway in 1962. That was 19 years and 11 plays ago. None of Albee's subsequent efforts has earned the sort of critical acclaim that was lavished on his early work. (Despite its Pulitzer Prize, *A Delicate Balance* was generally less well received.) In fact, most of his more recent plays have had precisely the opposite effect on his reputation—forcing Albee's admirers to ponder the painful question of how the playwright responsible for *Virginia Woolf* could possibly have written subsequent plays as vacuous as *All Over* or *Seascape*.

What went wrong? How could so promising a career run out of creative steam so quickly? In order to make sense of Albee's early success and subsequent failure, one has to recall the early Sixties when *The Zoo Story* and *Virginia Woolf* were first performed. Eugene O'Neill was dead. Both Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller had already entered a period of perceived decline. Both the theatergoing public and the journalistic establishment were eager to bestow the title "Great American Playwright" on *someone*.

Moreover, Albee's first one-act

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Virginia Woolf: **from left, Uta Hagen, Arthur Hill, Melinda Dillon, Ben Piazza.**

plays, with the exception of *The Zoo Story*, broke with traditional theatrical realism, and critics linked Albee with avant-garde European absurdists. His ability to write a realistic Broadway hit suggested the arrival of a miraculous talent, one that could reconcile conflicting traditions, possibly bring intellectually challenging fare into the commercial theater—and entertain at the same time. No wonder the media invested so much hope in his career—and why shreds of his reputation have lingered even though his early promise has remained unfulfilled.

The great irony is that Albee was more than a media-invention. *The Zoo Story* is probably the finest first play ever written by an American, and *Virginia Woolf* is considered by many to be the best American play of the last 25 years. By 1962, Albee had written several other, lesser one-acts (*The American Dream*, *The Death of Bessie Smith*), but essentially, his entire reputation rested on the strengths of his two best plays. It now seems clear that Albee was hailed prematurely and was given no real opportunity to mature as an artist. He had been crowned Great White Hope of the Great White Way; and now he was expected to sit down and churn out masterworks as mechanically as an assembly line produces canned goods. This sort of psychological burden is hardly conducive to the creation of works of art.

Albee's later failures, of course, should not detract from the considerable virtues in his early plays. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, for example, combines gut-wrenching passion, verbal combat of the knock-down, drag-out variety, and an apparent taste for ideas (the fleeting argument between George and Nick over the differences between history and biology, for instance, or the play's Spenglerian references to the decline of the West). Of course, on the most basic level, this is a claustrophobically focused study of four well-drawn characters; but on another level, it also succeeds as a complex allegory about the disintegration of the American family and the souring of the American dream. Some commentators have even suggested that the characters George and Martha are symbolic equivalents for George and Martha Washington. Albee himself has remarked that he chose those names because his play "contains an attempt to examine the success or failure of American revolutionary principles."

Unfortunately, the very quality that lends such complexity to *Virginia Woolf*—a desire to grapple with ideas—eventually led Albee astray. Certainly, if *Virginia Woolf* were to be stripped of its anguish, if it were less of an emotional ordeal and more of an intellectual colloquium pure and simple, the result would be an inconsequential play. This is precisely what happened in Albee's later work, beginning with *A Delicate Balance* (an ironic title indeed, for the delicate balance Albee had achieved earlier between emotional immediacy and metaphysical reflection began to tip in favor of the latter).

These later plays are pervaded by a spirit of remoteness and bloodless abstraction. Characters tend toward allegorical or generalized types. (In *All Over*, for example, the characters are identified only as "The Wife," "The Mistress," "The Best Friend," etc.) The settings for these plays became less specific, more "universal." Rather than give "to airy nothing a local habitation and a name," Albee was leaving us with airy nothing.

Saddest of all, the language of these later plays became oddly mannered, full of pithy, fortune-cookie wisdom. ("Continue the temporary and it becomes forever"—a typically sententious epigram from Albee's evolutionary allegory *Seascape*.) Clearly, in plays like *A Delicate Balance*, *All Over*, and *The Lady From Dubuque*, Albee was attempting to "metaphysicalize" the drawing-room comedy in the manner of T.S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*. But the problem—as Henry Hewes once noted—is that whereas Eliot wrote verse that sounded like prose, Albee writes prose that sounds like verse (and

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not very good verse at that.)

Why did Albee allow himself to become remote and mannered, why did he forsake the strong emotional qualities that made *Virginia Woolf* and to a lesser extent *The Zoo Story* so distinctive? In an article about *Tiny Alice* called "The Play That Dare Not Speak Its Name," Philip Roth criticized Albee's "unwillingness or inability to put its real subject at the center of action." The "real subject" that Roth referred to was, of course, homosexuality; and Roth concluded his polemic with the following plea: "How long before a play is produced on Broadway in which the homosexual hero is presented as homosexual, and not disguised as an angst-ridden priest, or as an angry Negro, or an aging actress, or worst of all, Everyman?"

One needn't resurrect the old canard that *Virginia Woolf* is "really" about four men in order to recognize the essentially homosexual nature of Albee's sensibility: weak men dominated by strong, overpowering women; heterosexual marriages that are sterile when not actively hostile; and bright, bitchy dialogue (sometimes steeped in movie lore as when Martha quotes Bette Davis's "What a dump!") that often seeks to humiliate and wound. I don't mean to suggest that these characteristics are peculiar to homosexual plays, only that plays by and about homosexuals (Mart Crowley's *The Boys in the Band* may be the most famous example) have often used such themes and devices.

Is it possible that *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, despite its many subterfuges, unwittingly revealed this sensibility too clearly, necessitating a retreat on Albee's part, and resulting in the remoteness of his subsequent plays? Perhaps this evasiveness about his own sensibility also accounts for Albee's apparent inability (or unwillingness) to find a distinctive "voice" of his own. In play after play, we find Albee borrowing heavily from a variety of contemporary European playwrights. *The American Dream*, for example, is Albee's version of Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*. *Box* and *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* owe an enormous debt to Beckett's *Play*. And Albee's continued interest in adaptation is yet another symptom of his uneasiness; he's more comfortable as a ventriloquist than he is speaking in the first person.

Of course, Albee is hardly unique in this regard. Eugene O'Neill wrote a considerable number of pseudo-European, reductively expressionist dramas while he self-consciously and imitatively sought a distinctive style. Ironically, O'Neill found his style the moment he stopped searching for it, when he mustered up the courage to write directly from his own experience. The result was his masterpiece, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Albee, by contrast, remains as yet too guarded about his own experience to make use of it in a similar fashion.

"As long as I have what in my mind passes as ideas, I'll go on writing. . . . I'd like to think that if my talent really evaporates, I'll be aware of it."

With each successive play, Albee shows less and less of the talent that made his early works so special and so promising. The same unfortunately can be said for America's two other best-known playwrights, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. What a sad, sad state of affairs! Whether it's Miller's *The American Clock* (which failed on Broadway earlier this season) or Williams's *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* (which failed on Broadway last season) or Albee's *Lolita* (about to open on Broadway), the weary theatergoing audience crosses its fingers but expects the worst. (Note that Miller's play was also an adaptation; it was based on Studs Terkel's book *Hard Times*, and Williams's play also drew from a ready-made source, the lives of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald.)

Should Edward Albee call it quits? Or does that sound too un-American, an admission of defeat? After all, we've been taught that there's something noble in this sort of blind perseverence, evidence of the human spirit's indomitability and all that. Perhaps Albee, Miller, and Williams derive sustenance from Beckett's description of the artist who has "nothing to express, nothing with which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express."

But is this continuing ritual of public humiliation somehow preferable to an honorable silence? Why do we assume that creativity is some infinitely renewable resource? Albee himself maintains that the questions aren't valid, that his much-maligned work of recent years has been merely misunderstood and underestimated. He even goes so far as to argue that a play like *All Over* may actually outlive *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* He speaks with the quiet assurance of someone who expects to be vindicated by history.

Relaxing in his spacious duplex loft in lower Manhattan, a home base filled with modern objets d'art and antiques, Albee insists that "if you're a playwright, you write plays. . . . As long as I have what in my mind passes as ideas for plays, I'll go on writing them. . . . I'd like to think that if my talent really evaporates, I'll be aware of it."

But why should Albee impose this sort of straightjacket on himself? *Saturday Review*'s theater critic Stanley Kauffmann has suggested that Albee would probably make a fine teacher, director, or literary manager for a major institutional theater. It would, of course, take tremendous courage for Albee to admit that it simply isn't in him to write another *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and that he has decided voluntarily to pursue a different, but still theatrically related career. Would this be so dishonorable? Quite the reverse, I suspect. No one faults Albee for his instincts. And if his sense of what *should* go into a theatrical production could inspire others to produce vital theater, Edward Albee might well bring about a legacy of more lasting value than his own recent output. ■

Roger Copeland is a professor of theater at Oberlin College and contributes to the *New York Times*, the *New Republic*, and the *Village Voice*.

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Bernard Malamud

by Katha Pollit

Born in Brooklyn 66 years ago, the son of a poor grocer, Bernard Malamud today is the celebrated author of seven novels and three collections of short stories, the holder of two National Book Awards and a Pulitzer Prize, the president of PEN, and one of the most original voices in contemporary fiction. He has written of heroism in baseball (The Natural) *and anti-Semitism in czarist Russia* (The Fixer), *of poor Jewish immigrants trapped in failing mom-and-pop stores* (The Assistant) *and the tragi-comic flounderings of the artist manque* (Pictures of Fidelman). *His most recent novel,* Dubin's Lives, *the story of a middle-aged biographer torn between his wife and his young mistress, is his longest and some think, most ambitious effort.*

Malamud and his wife, Ann, spend much of the year in a large white house on a quiet road in Bennington, Vermont, where for more than 20 years he has taught literature and creative writing at Bennington College. We talked in his study, a sunny spare functional room clearly meant for work.

Q *When did you start wanting to write?*

A Pretty early. I was always turning homework assignments into little stories. We'd be told to write a composition on Roger Williams or some aspect of life in the American Colonies and I'd make mine an adventure story. A little later, when I started going to the movies, I used to like to give long, minutely detailed, probably boring descriptions of the plots. I soon became aware I was a storyteller. I've always been one.

Q *What writers were your first heroes?*

A In my childhood, none other than the dime novelists who wrote Frank Merriwell, Nick Carter, Buffalo Bill—storytellers. I used to wait outside the stationery store for the new books to come in every other week. The joy of reading them! I really didn't get into serious reading until I was almost in college.

Q *By then you were already thinking of yourself as a writer?*

A Yes. I conceived of myself as wanting to write, without knowing what was going to come of it. This was during the Depression, and I knew I would need some kind of job right out of college. So I took courses in teaching, "education"—I hate that damn word! I also thought of studying law, but nothing ever came of it.

Many people who write do so not because of talent but because they have an anguish.

Q *Was there a moment in your early career—a prize, a publication, a kind word—that made you think you had a future as a writer?*

A Well, one helpful thing was winning the *Scholastic Magazine* essay contest in my senior year in high school—Erasmus Hall. I got a medal for a piece called "Life From Behind the Counter"—obviously I was already into the store, into the world of *The Assistant*. I'd been working on and off in my father's grocery since I was a kid.

Q *Was there anything in the craft of fiction, during those early years, that struck you as particularly difficult?*

A In the beginning, I didn't have much sense of the total effect of fiction, of all the extraordinary things it is capable of, and so my early stories tended to be decently plotted things that relied a lot on dialogue. Not that one comes to an enlarged vision first shot—the important thing, as someone writes, is to see that there might be in a story more than he has achieved so far, to tell himself what, and go after it. There's a gradual movement toward broader effects in my work—*Dubin's Lives*, for example, contains things I'd never done before in a novel.

Q *Where did the baseball material in* The Natural *come from?*

A Baseball was the sport I became aware of first. In my neighborhood, every night in summer, there was a crowd waiting at the corner candy store for the late newspapers with the late baseball scores. This was before many people had radios. I didn't play much baseball as a kid but I went to Ebbets Field and Yankee Stadium, I saw Babe Ruth, Dazzy Vance, and enjoyed the Brooklyn Dodgers in action.

Q *Many reviewers of* The Natural *seemed to be unable to deal with a book that worked on two levels. That must have been depressing for you.*

A It was, but you learn to read reviews selectively. You set aside those that

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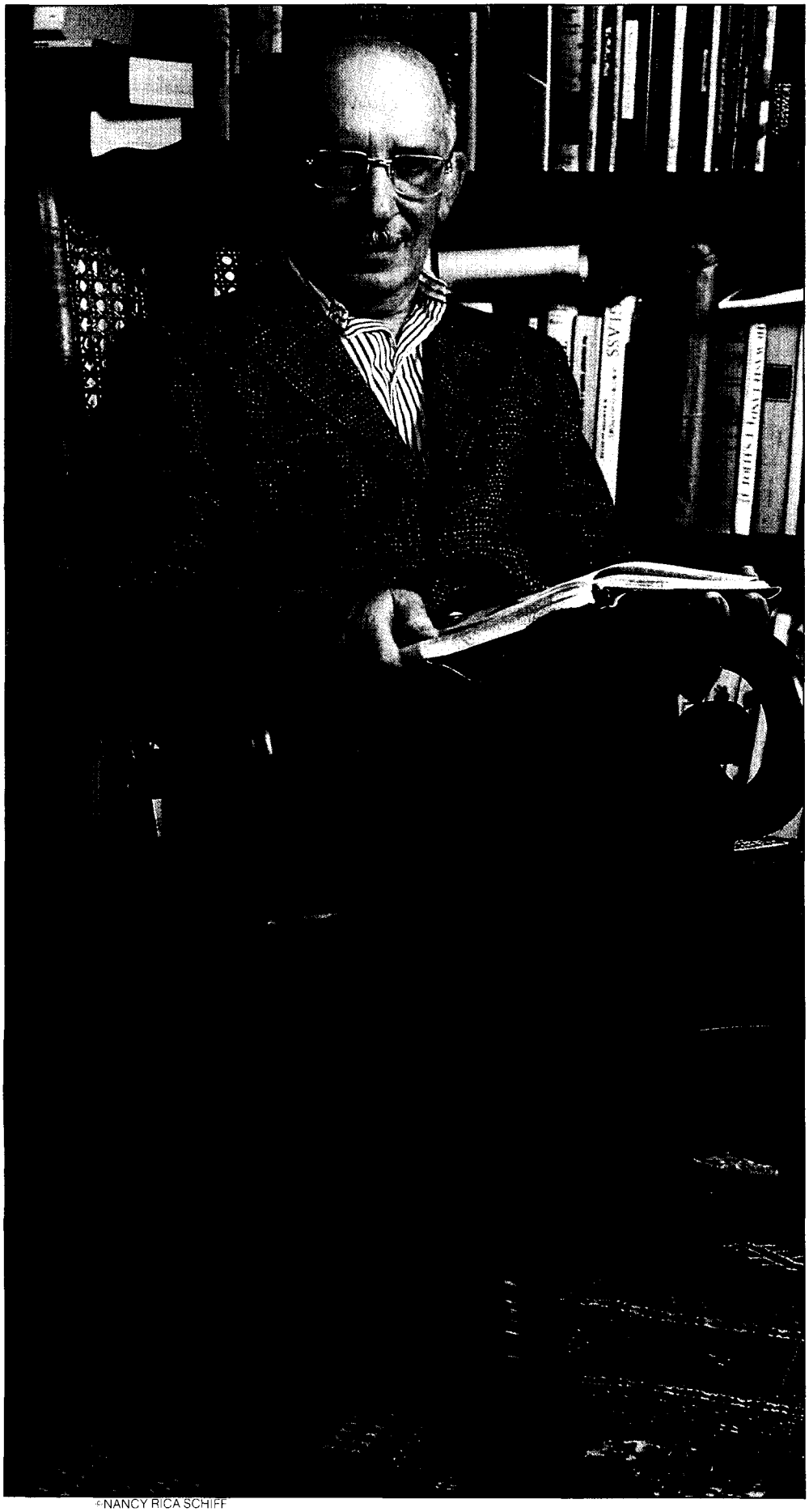

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simply don't comprehend what you're driving at. If there's just no understanding, what are you going to do? You turn to the people who can understand the quality of the book in terms of form, intention, invention. And time balances it out—today *The Natural* is taught in many American lit. courses, and of course I'm delighted.

Q *So many writers these days teach writing. Is that bad for them?*

A I don't think so. I'd advise a young writer to make a living any way he can, rather than depend entirely on writing. That way, he can be absolutely free in his choice of subject matter, and he doesn't have to worry if he writes a book that doesn't sell. I mean, he's got to keep going, to get on to his next book. So if teaching allows him to earn a certain amount of money and maintain his freedom, by all means let him teach, if he can.

Q *What about the effects of creative-writing courses on students?*

A When I go to England people say to me, "Ah, you Americans! Do you think you can teach writing?" The answer is no, you can't teach writing, but you can teach talented people; you can hasten their way through certain travails by pointing out roads that have already been taken. You can help young writers, who often have no idea what they're doing, to understand the insufficiencies of their work, and, possibly, the direction they have to go—in some cases, they ought to get out of writing entirely. What I don't approve, though, is placing too much emphasis on creative writing for undergraduates, who need an education and who really haven't found themselves yet. One creative-writing course for an undergraduate should be enough to discover whether he or she should go on or not. I'm a believer in doing it the hard way—getting into your small room, sitting at the table, excluding many of the pleasures of the world, and very seriously writing and writing, doing the burden of work that has to be done.

Q *Is this necessary isolation why so many of your characters have a sense of unlived life?*

A Isolation is an important drama for any writer, and it's bound to affect his

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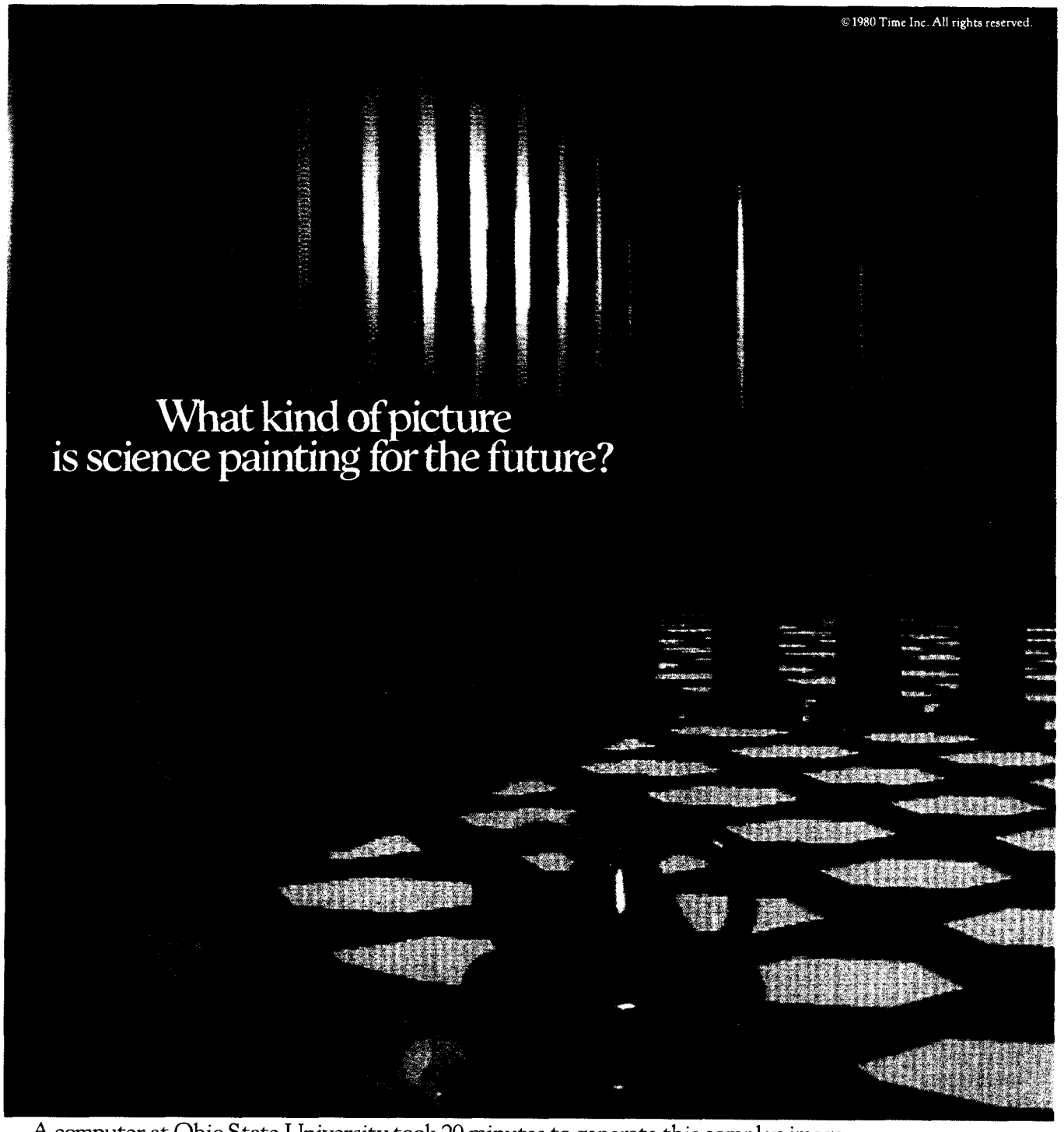

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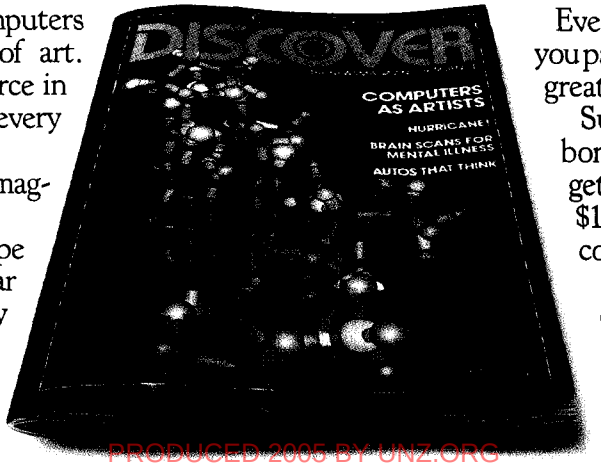

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characters. So much has to be given to the writing of a book—you *have* to shut yourself out of the variety of life. You have to make your choice, which is to stay at your desk with the book and not to regret that the day is beautiful and other people are going to the beach.

Q *And that sort of life is not for everyone?*

A Many people who go into writing do so not because they have a talent but because they have an anguish. They think their sad burdens will fall away overnight if they become successful writers. To these people, without talent I recommend no continuation.

Q *Have you ever been blocked in writing?*

A No. But I like to write about it. There's an enormous drama in not being able to find your way into a career, in confronting the mystery that prevents you from doing fulfilling work. Fidelman, for example, doesn't find what we used to call an identity, until the last sentence of *Pictures of Fidelman*, when he drops painting for glassblowing. A lawyer I know has gone into leathercraft, a stockbroker into pottery. Everyone has a desire to use some deep creative quality in the self, but sometimes they don't have the courage; sometimes they don't have enough talent to carry them through. It's almost as though the mystery shoves its hand in their faces, and only by dint of a large, difficult action are they able to get a basic insight into it.

Q *How does the germ of a fiction come to you?*

Look what readers have found in my work. It's like walking in a dark cellar and grabbing something that turns out to be a bouquet of flowers.

A There's no one way. Germs are independent, they come as they please.

Q *Do you go straight from one project to another, like Trollope, or do you rest between books?*

A I take some time off. Generally, between novels, I go to short stories. It's a good time to breathe.

Q *Does your daily routine change when you're at work on a book?*

A Not much; I work harder.

Q *Do you write books from start to finish, or in sections and snippets?*

A Start to finish, finish to start. I am a born reviser.

Q *Do you show your work to others while it's in progress?*

A I read to a friend, or friends. Sometimes I submit a chapter-in-progress to a magazine to see what it looks like in print, or I may read it at a public reading to hear what it sounds like in other people's ears.

Q *Do you know who your audience is? Do you write for a specific reader?*

A I write for myself and for the books and authors I most respect. I write for literature, because it moves me, and I want to be a part of it.

Q *Do people often wrongly assume your fiction is autobiographical?*

A Oh, yes. After *A New Life* I used to get letters asking whether I taught at such-and-such a place—there was a couple on the faculty who were exactly like the Gilleys. Well, they must have been visiting from the book! Where is Pauline Gilley, who is she? Don't ask me. Even informed critics make this error. After *Dubin's Lives* came out, an English critic wrote me saying, my, how difficult it must have been for you personally to write this book. Well, if the book was hard to write there were many reasons for it, but confession wasn't one of them. You won't find my autobiography in *Dubin's Lives*, although I dipped my finger—not my hand—more deeply into the autobiographical cream.

Q *You've said that* Dubin's Lives *was your attempt at bigness.*

A At breadth, at a fuller use of what I have to offer. For instance, I'd never used my love of nature so fully in a book before. Here I was able to make it part of the interior drama, and part of the mystery, too. I wanted to do more with character, also, to make life more complex, in the daily living of it, than I had done previously. And I wanted to get in more poetry, more of what is *in* me. With some fiction I read, the author doesn't really show what else he's got; he gets into a kind of Samuel Beckett mode and sings one tune forever.

Q *It's been said that a writer's first 20 years are his imaginative capital. Is that true for you?*

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A There are two periods of imaginative capital, the first 20 years and the rest of your life. The first 20 years give you the world of your childhood—in my case centering around my father and mother's life in their store. The richness of *The Assistant* indicates my immersion in that world. The richness of *Dubin's Lives* comes partly from asking myself what else I knew. I realized I had never really talked about marriage, so I thought I'd better do that. Right now, I'm working on a short novel, a fable, in which God is present.

Q *You're quite prolific.*

A Well, I'm not Joyce Carol Oates.

Q *Do you know what happens to your characters after a book is finished? Do Kitty and Dubin get their son out of the Soviet Union?*

A I don't know. Their daughter marries a Sephardic Jew and joins her father in writing a book. You learn that from the list of Dubin's biographies at the end of the book. That's the thing about fiction—you set so many things in motion, because you're dealing with words, and words have a rippling effect. Each person brings to a novel the pattern of his own life, and so he reads it in a slightly different way. For example, *The Assistant* is sometimes interpreted as a mythic drama initiated by the seasons, and *The Natural* as a myth of Ceres.

Q *Does that seem far-fetched to you?*

A No, although it would be fakery to say that I had those structures in mind as I wrote. What I do say is, look what else readers have found. It's like walking in a dark cellar and grabbing something that turns out to be a bouquet of flowers.

Q *How does the future of fiction look to you?*

A Good in the long run. Fiction is often in trouble, but people respond to imagination, talent, genius for language. They're born knowing what life is about and ultimately this is what fiction tells you. You learn from the imaginative what the real world is. ■

Katha Pollitt is a poet and critic who lives in New York City.

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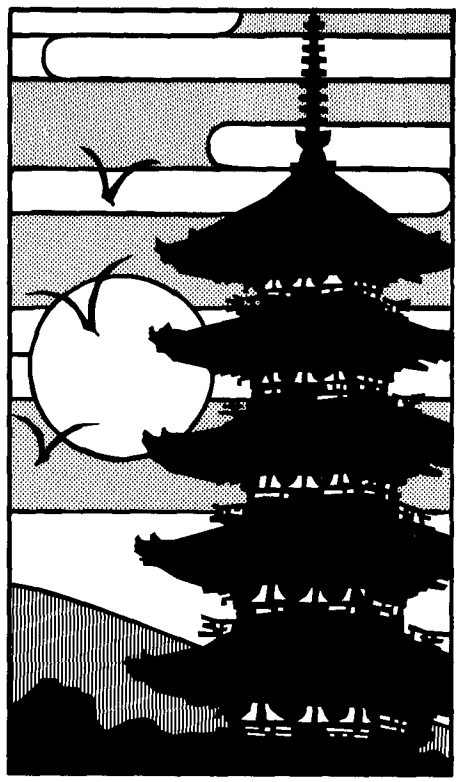

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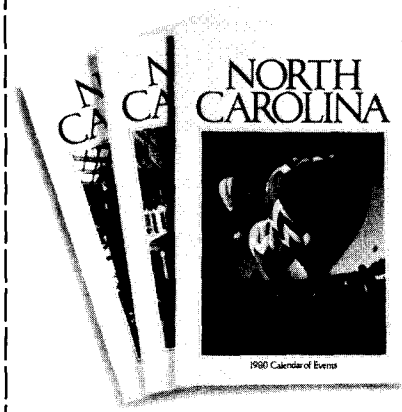

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Cultural New York
A Constant Festival

No metropolis ever offered such an overwhelming stir of constant cultural ferment as New York City. At almost any hour of the day or night, devotees of the arts can choose not from half-a-dozen events as in many cities, but from literally hundreds. *Die Meistersinger* at the Metropolitan Opera. An Edward Hopper retrospective at the Whitney Museum. Ibsen, Gilbert and Sullivan—and *42nd Street*, all on Broadway. Mikhail Baryshnikov at Lincoln Center. Rudolf Serkin at Carnegie Hall. A one-man show about John Keats at an off-off-Broadway theater tucked inside a church. Street musicians playing Albinoni on a windy corner of Fifth Avenue. Today's talk may be of Elizabeth Taylor's upcoming Broadway debut—or about a lecture on Italian film by Franco Zeffirelli. New York is not just "a helluva town...." It's a city where the curtain never comes down!

Calling New York "the Big Apple" was not just an idle inspiration. It had true meaning. Fifty years ago, when jazz musicians were playing one-night stands in tank towns all over the country, they yearned for the big time. "There are many apples on the tree," their saying went, "but to play in New York City is to play the Big Apple!" To emphasize that ultimate desire they created a dance called the Big Apple; a nightclub opened in Harlem bearing the name. Today, artists in all disciplines still count New York City as the Big Apple, the ultimate proving ground.

Today, the number of visitors lured to the country's premier cultural crucible is climbing to 20 million a year—many of them from overseas. For many foreigners, as well as for many Americans, New York has been a sophisticated, cultural dreamland ever since they were children. What they find when they arrive is a cultivated city whose artistic diversity is unique in the world, as this portfolio attests.

A Treasure-house of Theater

Mention New York to most people and, despite what other attitudes they may have about the city, their responses are likely to be the theater, the stage, Broadway. For New York remains virtually unchallenged as the preeminent theatrical city in the world.

Broadway, even today, is the street of performing dreams, volatile and exciting, where plays and careers bloom, are nurtured, or where they die.

New York's audiences are at once most responsive and most critical, and its critics are a numerous, varied, and opinionated lot. In New York *everybody* is a critic of the theater and the theater expects it.

For the theatergoer, veteran or tourist, the New York stage is simultaneously inventive, innovative, and predictable, and though it unabashedly caters to mass tastes at times, and is these days heavily dominated by musicals, it also dares. Thus there will be at any one time such resurrections as *Peter Pan*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *Oklahoma!*, *Brigadoon*, and *Oh! Calcutta!* sandwiched among such big musicals as *A Chorus Line*, *Barnum*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and *42nd Street*, but there will also be the experimental energy of *Dead End Kids* at the Public Theater in lower Manhattan, a transsexual reading of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, in an off-off-Broadway storefront, or *Ape Over Broadway*, a musical spoof of King Kong.

The most recent count lists 30 theaters that can be considered Broadway theaters, located in the midtown-Manhattan area bounded by 41st and 52nd Streets and Sixth and Eighth Avenues, with most in the side streets west of Broadway—not a large area by any means. Off-Broadway theaters such as the American Place, New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater, La Mama, Circle in the Square, and Theater De Lys, to name the most famous, number about 20 and they are scattered generally around Manhattan in small auditoriums, often in hotel meeting rooms.

There are perhaps as many as 100 off-off-Broadway theaters scattered about the city, in park buildings in Queens, SoHo lofts, Brooklyn churches, lower Manhattan warehouses, Staten Island school auditoriums. Often they will seat as few as 20 people per performance, and their quality soars and dips from magnificent to embarrassing. But it is in these off-off-Broadway theaters that new ideas blossom, and in recent years these theaters have proven to be where many Broadway hits were born.

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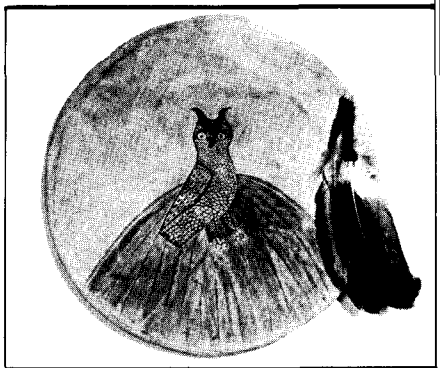

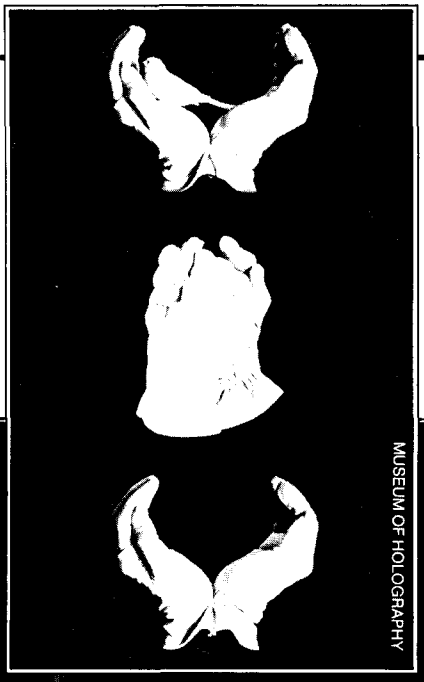

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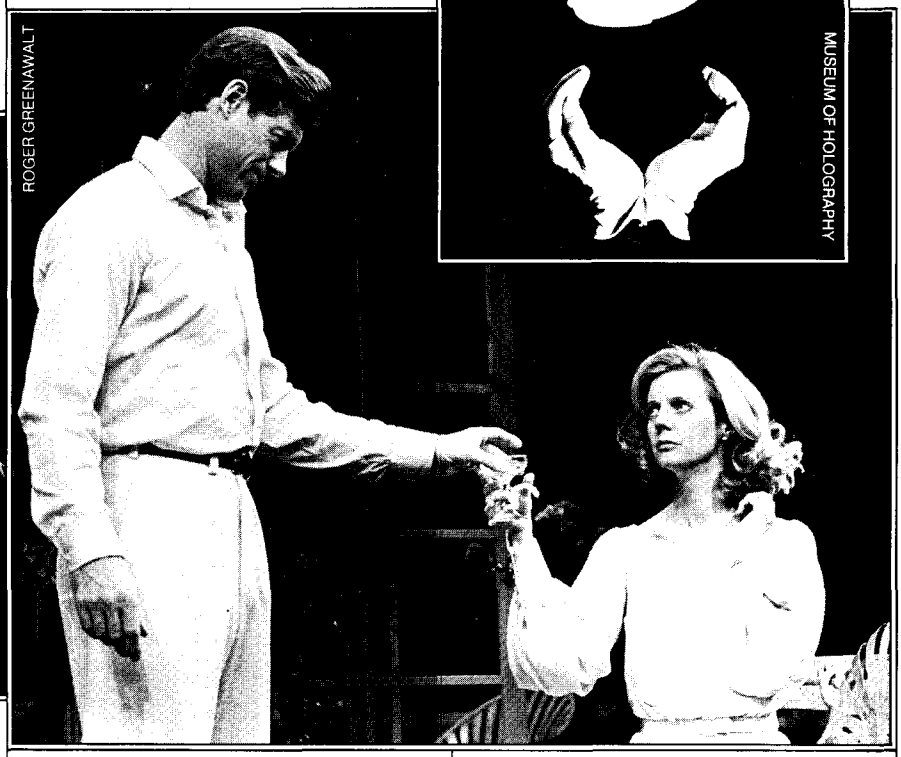

ROGER GREENAWALT

MARTHA SWOPE

Far left: *42nd Street*. This page: top left, a Sioux shield from the Museum of the American Indian; top right, a three-dimensional sequence from the Museum of Holography; bottom, this season's revival of *The Philadelphia Story*.

A Chorus Line was first produced in the Public Theater by Joseph Papp in downtown Manhattan, and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Gemini*, *Home*, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, and *Tintypes* first saw the footlights on stages other than those of Broadway. Today the extra-Broadway stage remains a place for adventurous theater, tryouts, revivals, testing grounds for new playwrights and young actors, for productions that Broadway is unwilling to risk untried. In addition, off-off-Broadway prices will please. Most of these theaters charge movie-house prices for their productions, and some are even lower.

No account of the New York theater should minimize the costs of tickets. They are high, with some musicals commanding as much as $30 and $35 a ticket. They can be even higher and, happily, lower, however. Tickets are usually available at theater box offices at about 10 in the morning right up until show time. And if you'd rather not stand in line, your hotel concierge or front-desk man may be able to obtain them for you at box-office prices, plus a small service charge if they have to go through ticket brokers. Brokers generally charge $2.50 above the face value of a ticket, but it is not totally unheard of to be charged as much as $20 and more for an "unobtainable" hot ticket. But this can be avoided by ordering your tickets well in advance of your New York trip.

Still another way to beat the high cost of theater tickets is to utilize the fine service right in the middle of Times Square, at 47th Street up from the statue of Father Duffy, called TKTS. In a banner-draped shed, tickets to virtually all shows on Broadway are available on a two-for-the-price-of-one basis. TKTS, more properly the Times Square Theater Center, has tickets for Broadway, off-Broadway, and for Lincoln Center, and is open seven days a week.

Tickets offered are for performances on that day only. No advance tickets are available. TKTS is open from 3 to 8 PM, Monday through Saturday for evening performances; for matinees, Wednesday and Saturday, it is also open from noon until 2 PM. On Sundays it is open from noon until 8 PM. There is also a downtown lower Manhattan Theater Center at 100 William Street, open Monday through Saturday, 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM. There can be a considerable wait given the bargain prices—but TKTS is the cheapest way to see top New York theater.

There is also some excitement, the excitement of the gamble. The tickets available change daily, often hourly, so you might join the line for one show and wind up buying tickets for another. Perhaps you wanted to see *42nd Street*, and when you get to the selling window you find that there are no tickets for that, but that there *are* two-fers for *A Coupla White Chicks Sitting Around Talking*, or *The Fantasticks*, or *One Mo' Time*. Consider yourself lucky, take your pick and buy two seats for the price of one to the very best of off-Broadway.

—Fred Ferretti

A Munificence of Museums

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There are the Museum of Modern Art, the site of the massive Picasso retrospective last summer; and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Frank Lloyd Wright's spiraling cylinder, where the huge exhibition of German Expressionism just closed; and the American Museum of Immigration underneath the Statue of Liberty, commemorating the succession of ethnic

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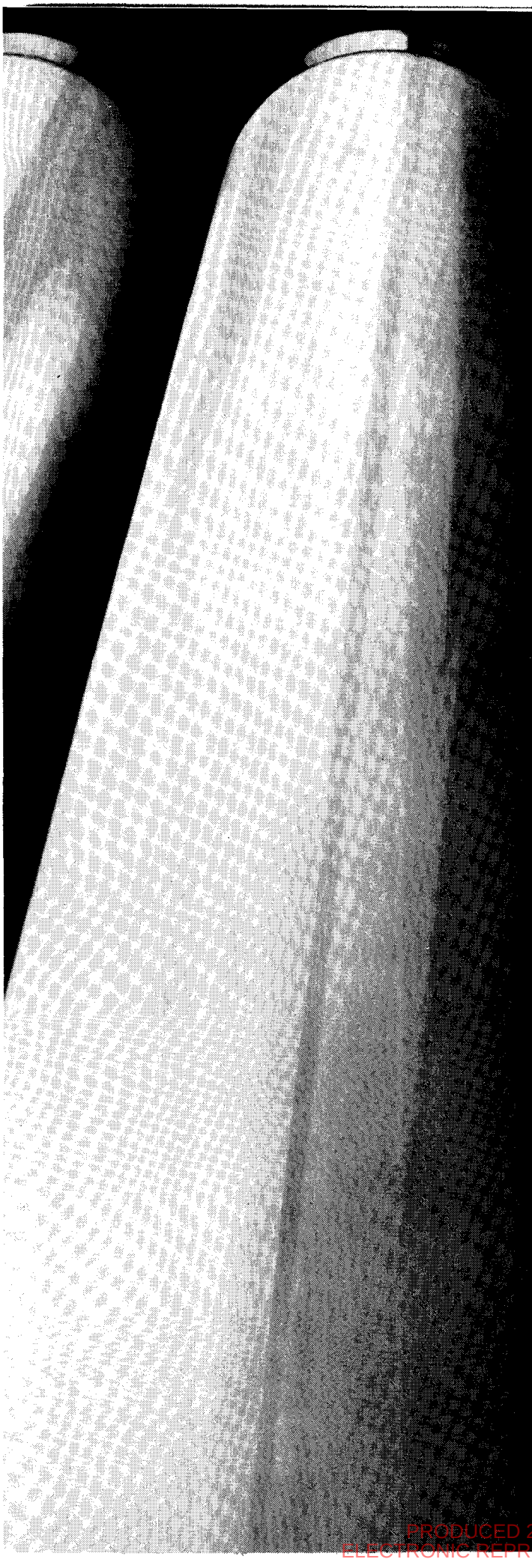

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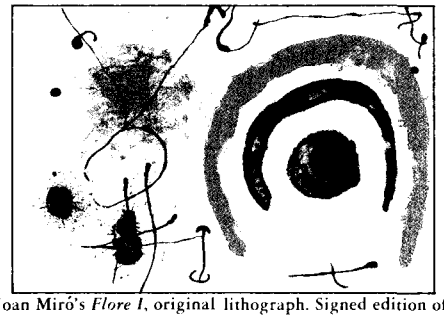

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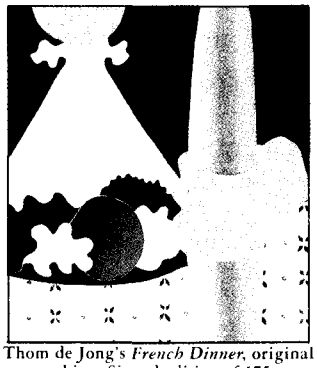

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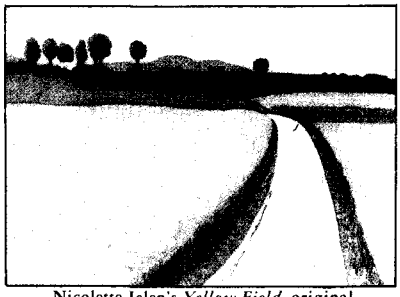

Nicolette Jelen's *Yellow Field*, original etching. Signed edition of 195.

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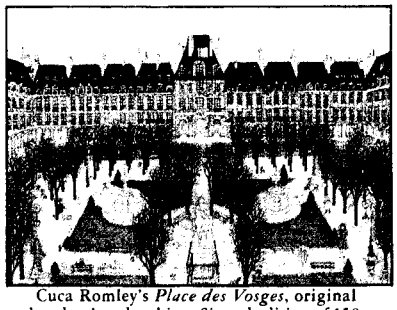

Cuca Romley's *Place des Vosges*, original hand-colored etching. Signed edition of 150.

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immigration waves.

There is the Museum of the American Indian, uptown at 155th Street, devoted to the ethnology of the Indians of North, Central, and South America; and there is the Breuer-designed Whitney Museum of American Art, devoted solely to American artists of the 20th century.

Seemingly, there is no limit to the exhibits of New York's museums. As a show closes in one, another is mounted across town. Chinese Han bronzes and life-size clay burial figures from Siam go back into packing cases at the Metropolitan, only to be replaced by tons of artifacts of the Vikings. Masks, drums, and tiny lost-wax bronzes appear in the African-American Institute for two months then go back into storage, and Edward Hopper's paintings are hung in the Whitney. A giant blue whale hangs from the ceiling of the Museum of Natural History's Hall of Ocean Life, while at the adjacent Hayden Planetarium, "The End of the World" is programmed on the 48-foot-high sky dome.

New York's museums are the Cloisters, far uptown, a tranquil medieval setting with 12th-century buildings from France and Spain painstakingly reconstructed; the Frick Collection of Renaissance bronzes, Italian furniture, and Limoges enamels; the Museum of the City of New York, a mixed bag of a place reflecting all the diversity of the city; the museum in the New York Public Library, where, behind the lions, you're apt to find cartoons alongside Egyptian cunieforms; and the Brooklyn Museum, a repository of the finest in African and South Pacific primitive art, and with a superb collection of graphics.

But the museums are, as well: the Abigail Adams Smith House on East 61st Street, an elegantly restored Federal carriage house; the American Numismatic Society's collection of coins and medallions; Aunt Len's Doll and Toy Museum, where among the 3,000 dolls and their houses you'll find miniature Dionne quintuplets; Bible House, with a full-scale reproduction of Gutenberg's press; the Fire Department Museum, in an old firehouse on Duane Street; the J.M. Mossman Collection of Locks; the Police Academy Museum; the South Street Seaport Museum with its aura of sailing ships; the Ukrainian Institute and Museum, dedicated to the crafts of these Russian people—including, annually, the *pysanky*, those carefully decorated Easter eggs; and Edgar Allan Poe's cottage up in the Bronx.

The city's kaleidoscope of art is echoed in its galleries. Along 57th Street, up Madison Avenue, and on and off West Broadway in SoHo are hundreds of galleries devoted to paintings, graphics, and sculpture—avant-garde or abstractionist establishments such as Leo Castelli and Ivan Karp, traditionalists like the Kennedy gallery and Knoedler's, print emporiums including Associated American Artists. Occasionally, artists such as Nicola Simbari even open their own galleries to show their work. And up on Madison Avenue at 79th Street is that combination gallery auction house Sotheby Parke Bernet, perhaps the most famous auction house in the world. Its many galleries are open to the public as well. Intermixed are galleries large and small, fashionable and threadbare, showing the widest possible range of work.

The list can go on. The museums reflect, as do most of the above, the ethnic diversity of New York. Every wave of immigration, it seems, has its museum. Every era of art has its museum, every historical period, every scientific period. Most of the city's museums do not charge admission. Some, like the Metropolitan, urge you to "contribute" something "voluntarily," with a gentle pressure that amounts to charging admission. Others just open their doors. Most are open weekends, some are closed on Mondays, usually the day set aside to take down exhibits and put others up, and to rest staffs after weekends of activity. And New York's museums are like the city itself—serious and amusing, highbrow and middle.

Where else are you likely to discover a Guinness World Records Exhibit Hall? A Museum of Broadcasting, complete with radio and video tapes of Edward R. Murrow and the Beatles? A Museum of Holography with all you'll ever need to know about lasers? A National Art Museum of Sports? Or the Songwriters Hall of Fame Museum? Listings of the many museums can be obtained from the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau, Columbus Circle, at the southwest corner of Central Park, and even that agency is located in what was once a museum—the Huntington Hartford Gallery of Modern Art. It fits.—**Fred Ferretti**

A Cornucopia of Concerts

When grandfather's grandfather was a grandchild, New York's musical life centered in the city's southernmost tip at Battery Park, where P.T. Barnum presented Jenny Lind. But progress—and music with it—crawled, then raced, uptown, concentrating not only at Lincoln Center in the West Sixties, but in the immortal words of James W. Blake's song about New York: "all around the town." Carnegie Hall, the ultimate destination of all the greats from Vladimir Horowitz to Diana Ross, has endured at the corner of 57th Street and Seventh Avenue long enough to be celebrating its 90th anniversary. It's still the grand lady of the scene, old enough to look in a patronizing way at Avery Fisher Hall to the north, not yet 20, home of Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic.

MARIANNE BARCELLONA

Zubin Mehta conducts the world-class New York Philharmonic at Avery Fisher Hall.

Contrary to some apprehensions during the Sixties, the possession of two great auditoriums has not fragmented New York's musical life, but multiplied it. And Alice Tully Hall, across 65th Street from the stage entrance to Avery Fisher, has not swallowed recitals and chamber music concerts, but stimulated more activity.

All this is good news not only for residents, but for visitors. The great fame of Carnegie and Avery Fisher Halls, the Metropolitan Opera House, and the New York State Theater should not obscure the existence of a dozen other places whose activities may, on a given evening, preempt what is going on elsewhere.

As an instance: the choicest place in New York to hear great music greatly per-

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formed is Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium in the Metropolitan Museum of Art at Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street. Seating hundreds, rather than thousands, it is intimate, its acoustics excellent, and its usual audiences—no small advantage—attuned to what they are hearing.

Not far away on the East Side (Lexington and 92nd Street), the Theresa Kaufman Auditorium is one of the most attractive, wood-lined structures in town. Part of a neighborhood "Y," its attractions range from the greatest lyricists and song writers talking about their craft to Beethoven quartets in noble serenity. Daniel Barenboim, not long ago, chose the hall to perform an all-Liszt evening on the piano.

Or, if your mind is on other values, try the New School for Social Research on West Twelfth Street, traditionally known for esoterica at its best. For that matter, Lincoln Center has a new neighbor, the Concert Hall of the Abraham Goodman House on West 67th Street, whose location and size (457 seats) caused it to be booked through several seasons even before its first concert. It is somewhat larger than the Recital Hall on an upper floor of Carnegie Hall. However, that venerable auditorium has recently been redecorated, and it is a fine site for hearing the debuts of emerging young artists.

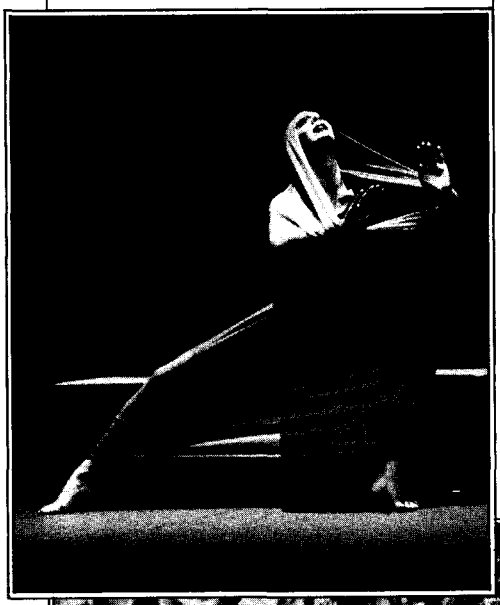
As for rock and Rachmaninoff, the really soulful surroundings for both is Symphony Space, formerly a film theater at 95th and Broadway where you can wander in and out during a weekend marathon devoted to Schubert, or settle down as jazz pianist Cecil Taylor and his group go on and on and on. Further down Broadway (74th Street), the Beacon Theater, capacious and vivacious, has been converted from a cinema to a concert hall.

Nor should the numerous educational institutions around town be ignored. The Juilliard School in Lincoln Center accommodates under one roof not only all its educational facilities, but, in addition to Alice Tully Hall, the handsome Juilliard Theater designed by Pietro Belluschi, where intimate opera may be heard to maximum advantage. The Mannes College of Music on East 74th Street has a cozy recital hall for suitable works, but the school also makes use of the Marymount Manhattan Theater on East 71st Street.

Then there is BAM, an acronym for the Brooklyn Academy of Music, famous in the past for performances by the Metropolitan Opera and the Boston Symphony in its splendid main auditorium. This facility and several others within the building have been reactivated in recent seasons with Lukas Foss as composer-conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonia Orchestra, theatrical productions of quality, a resident ballet, etc. It is readily reachable from Manhattan via the Atlantic Avenue station of the Lexington Avenue subway line.

Finally, and too long overlooked in New York's abundant musical life, is the steady succession of high-quality performances in its handsome churches. At the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, at Central Park West and 65th Street, Bach may be heard almost weekly (save during Lent) at a 5 PM Vesper service; and Friday nights at St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House at Park Avenue and 50th Street are devoted to classics of the choral literature. Its organ was the instrument on which Leopold Stokowski began his musical career in America—and think where that took him! It's all there and worth hearing.

—Irving Kolodin



PHOTOS BY MARTHA SWOPE

New York is home for (top) Peggy Lyman dancing Martha Graham's *Lamentation* and (below) Mikhail Baryshnikov in the American Ballet Theatre's version of *Giselle*.

A Delirium of Dance

New York, indisputably, is the dance capital of the world. Not a day goes by without some significant dance event—and usually several—taking place in New York, a boast no other American city can make. From April to autumn, the glittering Metropolitan Opera House, which can accommodate some 4,000 fans at each performance, offers the great ballet companies of the world, from the American Ballet Theatre to the Royal Ballet, the Stuttgart, the Netherlands, and the Bolshoi. Next to the Met is the New York State Theater, home of the world-famous New York City Ballet and occasional host to visiting dance companies as well. Lincoln Center has even offered dancers at its main concert auditorium, Avery Fisher Hall, and alfresco on starry nights at the Damrosch Band Shell. But dance and dancers are not confined to Lincoln Center. Ballet companies, modern dance groups, folkloric ensembles from nearby and distant exotic lands regularly visit New York's Broadway stages and concert halls. If it's a well-known company, it has played New York.

America invented the tap dance, and where better to see it than in Broadway musicals and variety shows, or in tap dance sessions given by the old masters themselves, performing for audiences that cram a theater or an opera house to its doors? Precision dance? Can any place in the world provide an ensemble equal to the 36 Rockettes at the Radio City Music Hall (where the great stage is exactly 36 Rockettes wide!)?

The empress of the world's modern dance, Martha Graham, resides in New York, and her company commences its world tours here. Others of America's modern dancers and their companies, composed of every nationality, are to be seen in concerts and repertory seasons all the way from Broadway to Brooklyn and the Bronx, from stages surrounded by red-plush seats to foam cushions scattered on a loft floor. Our avant-garde, with occasional glimpses of pertinent nudity, of noble and radiant mien, is to be

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found in little neighborhood churches or in some of our great cathedrals. Sooner or later, all important dancers test themselves in New York. Until they do, their importance is an open question.

All dancers in New York, famous or just beginning, are in plain view: You will find them everywhere, walking—as only dancers walk, with a Charlie Chaplin turnout of the feet—with their bags filled with dance practice clothes, on the way to or from the theater or to the classes they attend every day.

But no matter who the dancer is, a superstar or a young hopeful, New York is the goal. And the visitor to New York, therefore, will find here the world's most famous dancers as well as those who will be stars tomorrow. New York is the ultimate dance crucible. **—Walter Terry**

Lincoln Center: The Crown Jewel

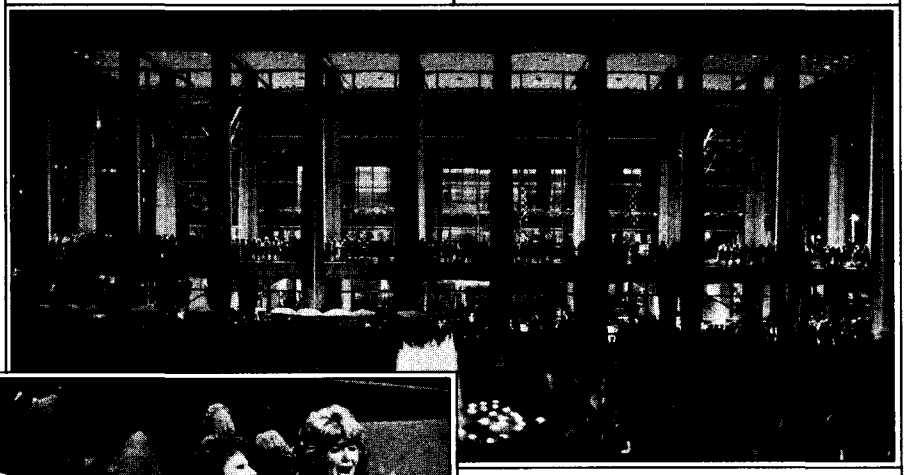
On January 5, an audience of millions watched *A Lincoln Center Special: Beverly! Her Farewell Performance*, a gala tribute to Beverly Sills, retiring diva and incoming director of the New York City Opera Company. Yet even the splendid *Live From Lincoln Center* series, which in its four-year existence has brought 30 evenings of outstanding cultural events to American audiences, cannot fully duplicate the immediacy of the actual performance in the theater. Whatever cultural lodestone attracts you—Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic, George Balanchine's New York City Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre—Lincoln Center must be experienced first hand.

Begun in 1959, the Center had cost $185 million, double the original estimates, by the time it was completed in 1969, yet we have no tables or charts for assessing the phenomenal artistic dividends that have flowed from this investment. Between 1967 and 1970, the Metropolitan Opera mounted an awesome new production of Wagner's Ring Cycle, which still towers Valhalla-like in the Wagnerian repertories throughout the world. In 1968, the Repertory Company of Lincoln Center offered a triumphant revival of Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* at the Vivian Beaumont, starring George C. Scott and directed by Mike Nichols. In 1974, Mikhail Baryshnikov, now director of the American Ballet Theatre, leaped spectacularly into dance stardom in his American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House.

During the same period, the Center initiated the highly popular Mostly Mozart concerts in August; the prestigious Great Performers series, which has presented such demigods of the concert hall as Joan Sutherland and Daniel Barenboim; and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, which *New York Times* critic Harold Schonberg has termed "the musical success story of the generation." Popular culture is represented by the 17-year-old Film Society of Lincoln Center, one of the handful of major showcases for new movies in the world. An overall tabulation of attendance done at the Center's 20th anniversary in 1979 shows 31,000 performances before an audience of 52 million.

Though Lincoln Center helped create a vogue for emporiums of culture across the country (the Music Center in Los Angeles and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., for instance), the Center retains a national—perhaps global—preeminence, since it has achieved a density of important cultural activity that is without parallel. With a premier dance company, two distinguished opera companies, and a world-class symphony, the complex is rather like an overstuffed pirate's chest. Whereas drama has not flourished at the Center the way the other arts have, new seeds have recently been planted at the Vivian Beaumont, where a six-person directorate that includes Woody Allen, Sarah Caldwell, and Ellis Raab is supervising a vibrant new theatrical series.

Great culture has often had to survive in banal or squalid surroundings, but at the Center the physical setting only serves to augment and deepen an audience's aesthetic pleasure. For seekers of culture, Lincoln Center is a shop in which no buyer needs to beware. **—Robert F. Moss**



SUSANNE FAULKNER STEVENS

Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center (top) and Beverly Sills's farewell performance.

Downtown Reborn

A tablet on the fence enclosing a small patch of greenery in lower Manhattan declares that this verdant enclave amid the towering skyscrapers is the oldest public park in town. It dates from 1732 when the Dutch burghers inhabiting Nieuw Amsterdam, as this settlement was called before the British took it over and gave it a name that would stick, used this greenery to bowl on the green. The park is still called Bowling Green.

This lower end of New York, which was once its heartbeat, full of hotels and nightlife, is in the midst of a spirited renaissance. Over on the East River, where huge schooners used to tie up, inbound from China and Africa, the city has just approved a $203-million project for the South Street Seaport adjoining New York's old and odoriferous Fulton Street Fish Market.

The famous old market building, in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge, was torn down in 1952, and soon a maritime museum began to emerge, and, with it, a neighborhood of shops that catered to visitors. Now the city's waterfront will get a substantial cultural uplift, an expansion of the Seaport Museum, and the restoration of historic houses on Schermerhorn Row. A pedestrian mall will be created from parts of Fulton Street, Front Street, and Water Street.

Chinatown, just to the north, is becoming what has been called the largest community of overseas Chinese in the world. The new, spreading Chinatown, with immigrants from areas other than Canton, has moved into neighborhoods

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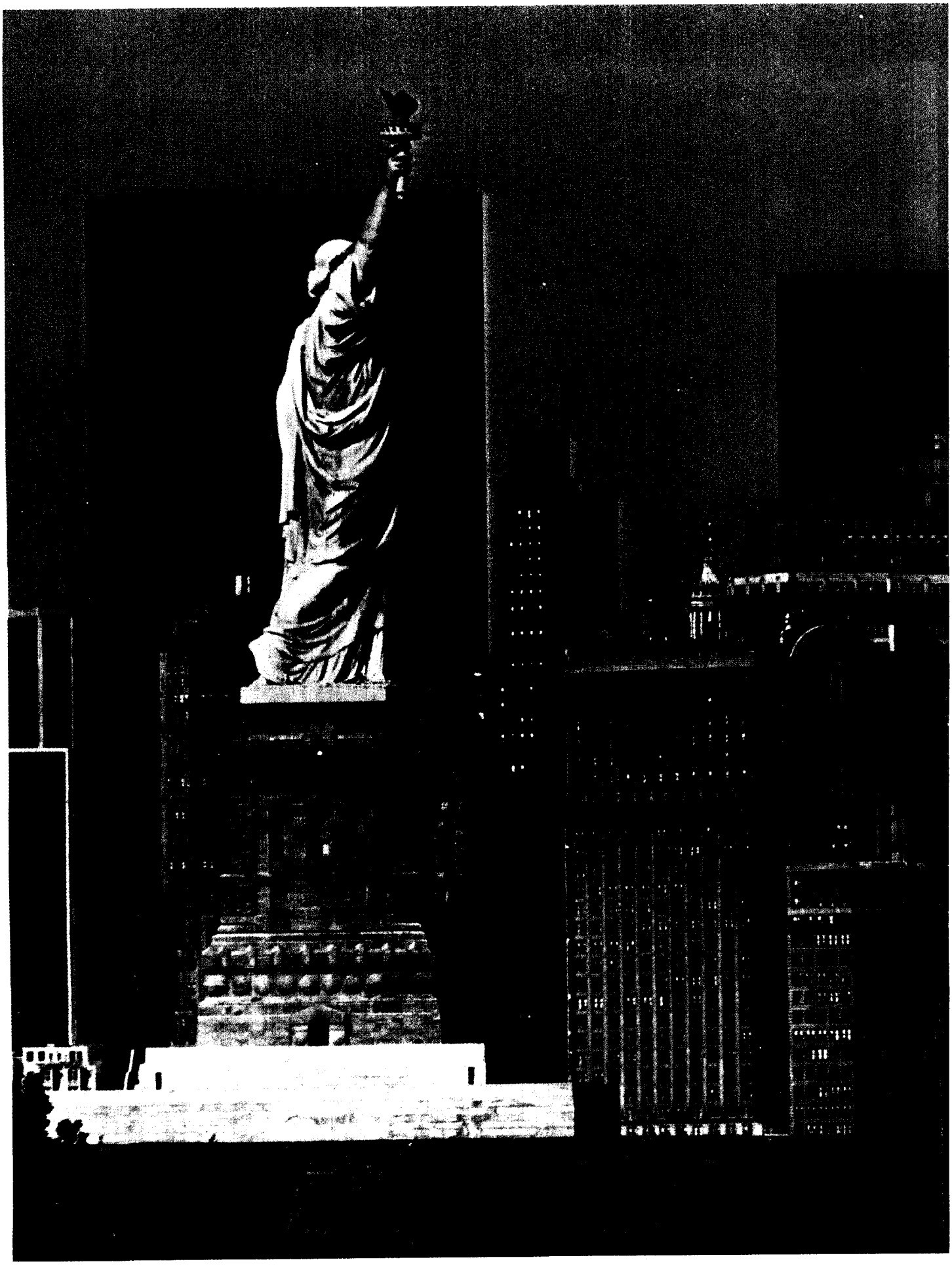

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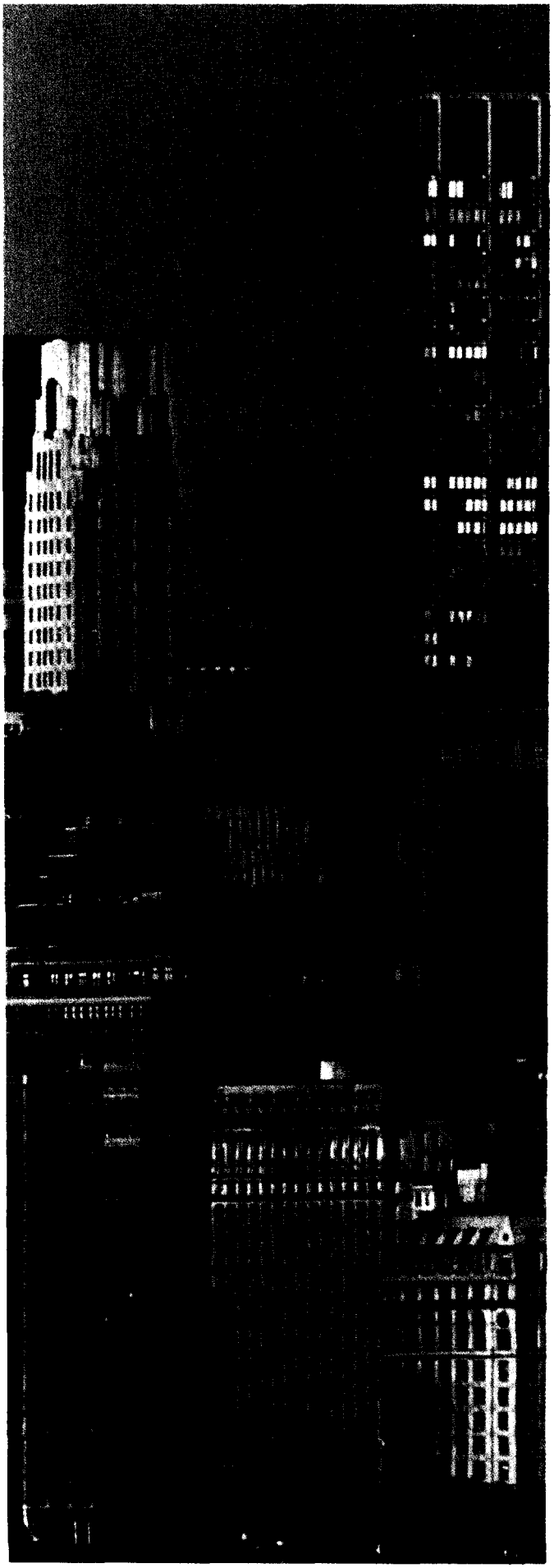

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once occupied by the traditional Jewish Lower East Siders and people of Little Italy. Filled with restaurants, tea houses, and shops, it is one of the city's most rewarding browsing areas.

Two maps of Lower Manhattan have been published, one through a grant offered by Merrill Lynch, the other called "Where They Lit Up New York," a walking tour of Thomas Edison's "first district." The Edison pamphlet, put out last year, commemorates the invention of the incandescent lamp in 1879. Two years later Edison settled on a generating station on Pearl Street, and the guide is designed to show buildings that figured in the development of the district.

The Merrill Lynch map is a Heritage Trail that starts at Foley Square, arrives at City Hall, which it calls "one of the city's

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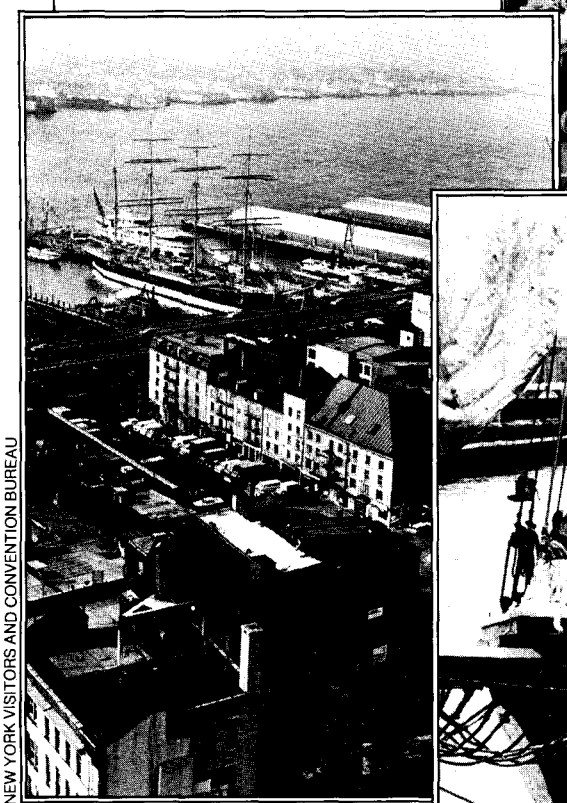

NEW YORK VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU

NEW YORK VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU

Top: a Chinese New Year celebration in Chinatown. Below: (left) the South Street Seaport complex, where the vintage ship Caviare (right) is berthed.

finest architectural gems," built between 1803 and 1811, and City Hall Park, a pasture and a parade ground for the Dutch. It was here that the Declaration of Independence was read before Washington and his troops on July 9, 1776.

The Woolworth Building, once the tallest building in the world, and known as the Cathedral of Commerce, is a prime stop, and so is St. Paul's Chapel, the oldest church in Manhattan, where Washington worshipped during his terms as president.

The route heads straight to Battery Park before snaking uptown through the financial district to South Street Seaport. The World Trade Center, just to the west, gave New York's downtown its biggest lift, creating a whole indoor city inside two mammoth towers. There has been some criticism of the towers as examples of architecture, but there is no getting around the excitement and the esprit induced by the myriad of exciting restaurants and bazaars that opened within the towers. Not the least was the fame brought by Windows on the World, a restaurant occupying nearly an acre 107 floors above the sidewalk. But the complex is also enlivened by cafe tables scattered on the plaza where dawdlers can buy their wares from the assorted shops, eat, and watch the world of downtown buzz by. **—Horace Sutton**

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A Hotel Bonanza

No Rip Van Winkle awakening from a long sleep would be likely to recognize the Grand Hyatt, the New York showpiece of Hyatt Hotels, as the old Commodore, grafted as it was to Grand Central Station. The Grand Hyatt rises in a splash of glass at its elegant address—Park Avenue at Grand Central. So startling and sleek is its exterior that the venerable railroad station which is its neighbor is being sandblasted of the grime of decades so it won't be a "blight" on the newly uplifted neighborhood.

Hyatt puts its hallmark on atriums and its imprimatur on exciting lobbies, and here water splashes over a five-tier marble waterfall, and an enormous sculpture dangles from the ceiling. The SunGarden is a glass-enclosed bar cantilevered over 42nd Street.

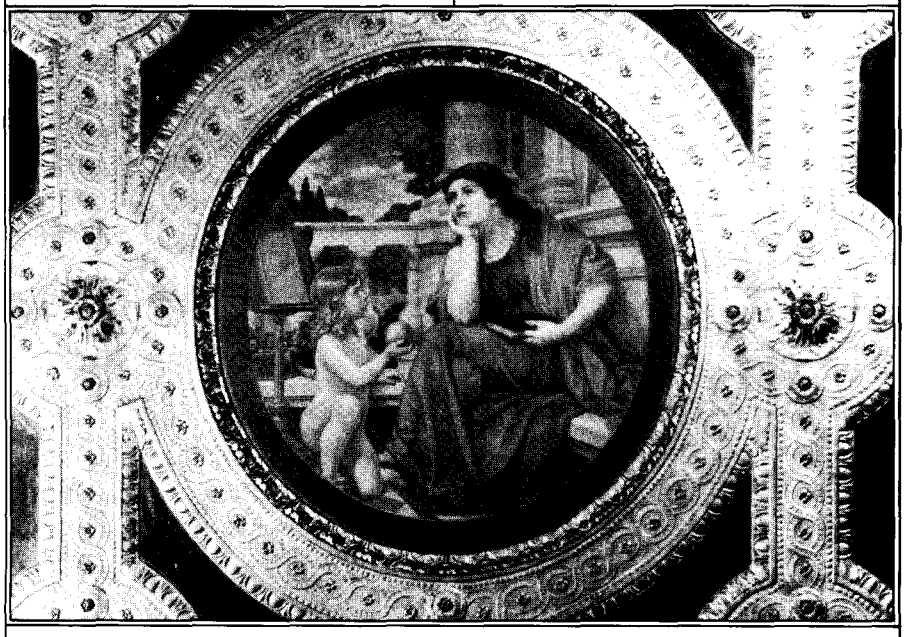
Meanwhile, eight blocks uptown, sparkle and splendor that is at least equal to what has been going on at 42nd Street is being generated by the Helmsley Palace, the extravaganza on Madison Avenue and 50th Street, that cost an estimated $100 million. What ran up the price here were the Villard Houses, six brownstone houses made to look like one mansion built in 1882 by German immigrant and millionaire Henry Villard.

It was this grand mansion once occupied by Random House on one wing and the Archdiocese of New York on the other that was offered to Harry Helmsley, the realtor, as a hotel. To his initial chagrin (and later joy), Helmsley discovered that the south wing had been certified a landmark and couldn't be altered. He elected to polish the Tiffany glass, hone the marble stairways, shine the Saint-Gaudens fireplaces, gild the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the music room designed by Stanford White, and use them all for public rooms. The formal Italian courtyard marks the grandest entranceway of any hotel in New York. As for the guest rooms and ballroom, they rise in a great glass shaft behind the Villard Houses.

Recognizing the acceptance, at last, of the United States as a tourist destination, and New York its prime exponent, several international chains are planting Gotham hotels. Air France's Meridien chain is opening a stylish outpost on 57th Street, and Vista International, a new offshoot of Hilton International, is unveiling its first mainland domestic hotel alongside the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. After an investment of $60 million, the hybrid Hilton will store business people during the week, and function as a high-rise resort on weekends. Joggers will be able to canter around the dome of its 23rd floor swimming pool.

In the theater district, the old Royal Manhattan has become the Milford Plaza,with down-to-earth prices and a view of Shubert Alley. Helmsley has another new hotel, the Harley, near the New York Daily News Building, and John Coleman, who specializes in small, elegant inns, has bought the Navarro on Central Park South and is remaking it floor by floor. Extensive upholstering has been done to Dunfey's Berkshire,now Berkshire Place, to Sheraton Centre, (once the Americana), and to Loews' handsome Drake on Park Avenue.

—Horace Sutton



A ceiling rondel by George W. Breck, which decorates the Helmsley Palace Hotel.

The Cultivating Corporations

Most corporations with any real estate in New York City soon find themselves catching the town's cultural fever. Many become generously forthcoming with promotional and financial support.

Usually, New York corporations begin by simply contributing cash to local museums. PepsiCo, like many others, distributes its largesse liberally among most of New York's major art institutions—even though PepsiCo has moved somewhat north of the city. Then, as corporations grow more sophisticated, many go on to defraying the substantial costs of significant—if temporary—exhibits. IBM, for example, helped the Museum of Modern Art mount its famous Picasso retrospective last year. Philip Morris supported the Whitney Museum's Edward Hopper retrospective, while American Can contributed to the Whitney's survey of New Image Painting. United Technologies sponsored "Eisenstaedt: Germany" at the International Center of Photography—and Mobil Corporation sees to it that both the Whitney and the Guggenheim museums remain open to the public, free, every Tuesday evening.

Though Broadway is traditionally financed by "angels" who hope to back hits and earn fabulous financial profit, much of New York's off- and off-off-Broadway theater is nobly nonprofit, and Citibank, for one, helps keep many such operations solvent. The corporation has been particularly supportive of the New York Shakespeare Festival, among others, while Xerox's largesse helps out such troupes as the Negro Ensemble Company.

Texaco's 41-year tradition of supporting (and promoting) the Metropolitan Opera is now part of America's corporate art lore. But these days, the oil company's commitment to opera is far from unique. AT&T, for instance, has helped establish and finance a marketing department to sustain the New York City Opera.

Not all of corporate New York's generosity toward the arts lies hidden indoors. One monumental sculpture, "Group of Four Trees," by Jean Dubuffet, crowns Chase Manhattan Plaza. And many corporate buildings that were constructed in recent decades—Exxon's, for instance—stand next to tiny, trim, vest-pocket parks, complete with sculptures and waterfalls.

Perhaps ITT summed it all up. The international conglomerate sponsored an exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York that celebrated everything this very survey has been talking about: The exhibit was called simply "The Big Apple."

—Robert F. Moss

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A Brahmin's Old Masters

by Malcolm N. Carter

ALEX WASINSKI

Such was his breeding that William A. Coolidge felt at ease with art; he grew up in its midst, justifiably dismissing the paintings at home as unremarkable. "That sort of gets under your skin," Coolidge recalls as a cold autumnal rain puddles the farmland surrounding his home in Topsfield, Massachusetts. Nonetheless, his Harvard education having been burnished by a stint at Oxford's Balliol College, he was daunted by the prospect of acquiring his first painting.

It was 1927, and Coolidge was on his way home from England. With time to kill, he dropped into Christie's for the first time. A Corot to be auctioned the next day caught his eye. Painted by the artist in the last years of his life, the canvas showed an old woman sitting under an old tree and gazing at a pond made luminous by the moonlight. "I absolutely loved it," Coolidge remarks. "I had to have it."

But he had a problem. In those days, one couldn't make a transatlantic telephone call for advice, and the only thing Coolidge knew about the Corot was that he liked it. "I didn't know whether it was worth £50 or £500," he recounts. Surmising that the art dealers would occupy the front row at the auction, he managed to get a seat behind them and resolved to bid 10 percent more than they did for the painting. Thus he acquired the Corot for the equivalent of approximately $4,000 and, ironically, established a relationship with the dealer he had outbid.

The dealer was Dudley Tooth of Arthur Tooth & Son, who had the wit to oblige Coolidge by shipping the Corot to the United States for him. "I certainly dropped in on Tooth whenever I went to London," Coolidge says, adding that he bought many thousands of dollars worth of paintings from him over the years. As for the Corot, "Clair de Lune," Coolidge has since given it to his niece.

Although $4,000 is an impressive expenditure even today, he could easily afford the sum. For he is a Coolidge as in Calvin (a distant cousin of his 17th-century ancestors). His grandfather was T. Jefferson Coolidge, a notable financier of his time who was especially interested in the Amoskeag textile mills at Manchester, New Hampshire. His father was Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, who founded the Old Colony Trust Co. in Boston, now merged with the First National Bank. And his brother, also Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, was chairman of United Fruit Co.

William Appleton Coolidge was graduated from Harvard in 1924. When he returned from Oxford with his Corot three years later, he tried his hand at being a stockbroker but went back to Harvard to study law in 1933. In 1936, he joined one of Boston's premier law firms, now Ropes & Gray. Coolidge stayed there for about five years, dabbling in the nascent venture-capital field. In 1940, he put up most of the money to found what became the National Research Corp., which he eventually ran. Meantime, Coolidge spent the rest of World War II in the Navy Department, where he was a special assistant for procurement. He returned to Boston in 1946 and two years later bought his current home.

Built by Coolidges, the imposing red-brick edifice stands on 500 rolling acres above the Ipswich River some 25 miles north of Boston. It looms defiantly at the end of a graceful roadway, seemingly a misplaced amalgam of a southern plantation and an estate in Baltimore's hunt country. Inside, woodwork from a 1782 house of the Brahmin Saltonstalls evokes a heritage much older than the 58-year-old structure. Noting that he had bought the place completely furnished following the death of his kin, Coolidge says that they had left until last the purchase of art. It's no wonder that they never got

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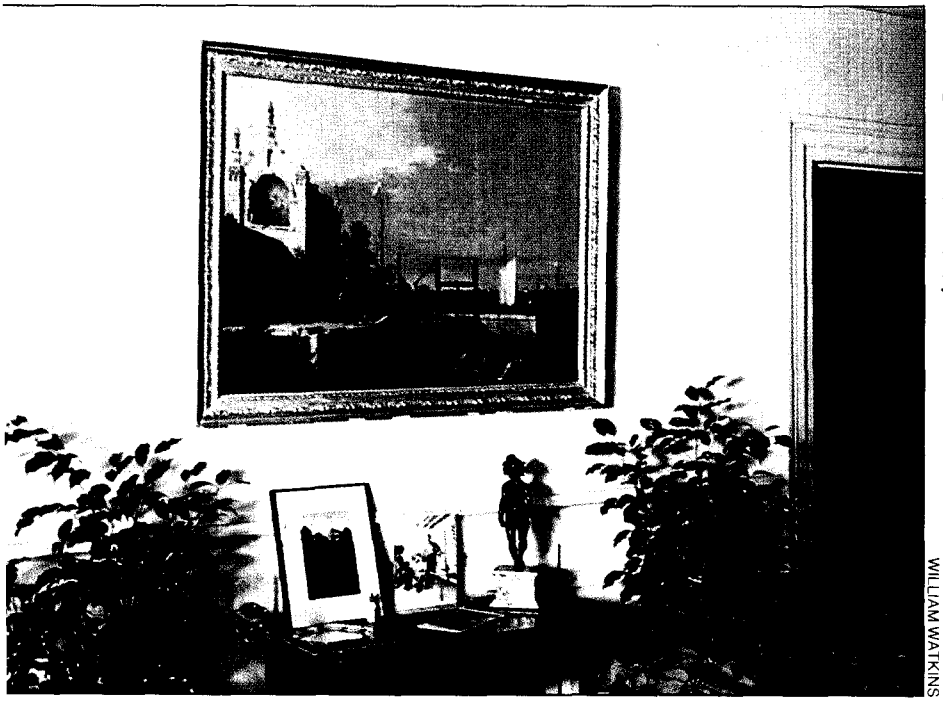

WILLIAM WATKINS

Above: William Coolidge in "the big room." On the wall behind him, left to right, paintings by Del Sarto, van Dyck (attributed), Andrew Wyeth, and Signac. On the piano, silver platters flank a sculpture from life of Frederick Augustus II of Poland and III of Saxony (whose soup tureen rests behind the piano). And far to the right, a ruby-studded, 13th-century Indian princess's jewelry box carved from ivory. Left: a Canaletto hangs above a table holding various personal mementos.

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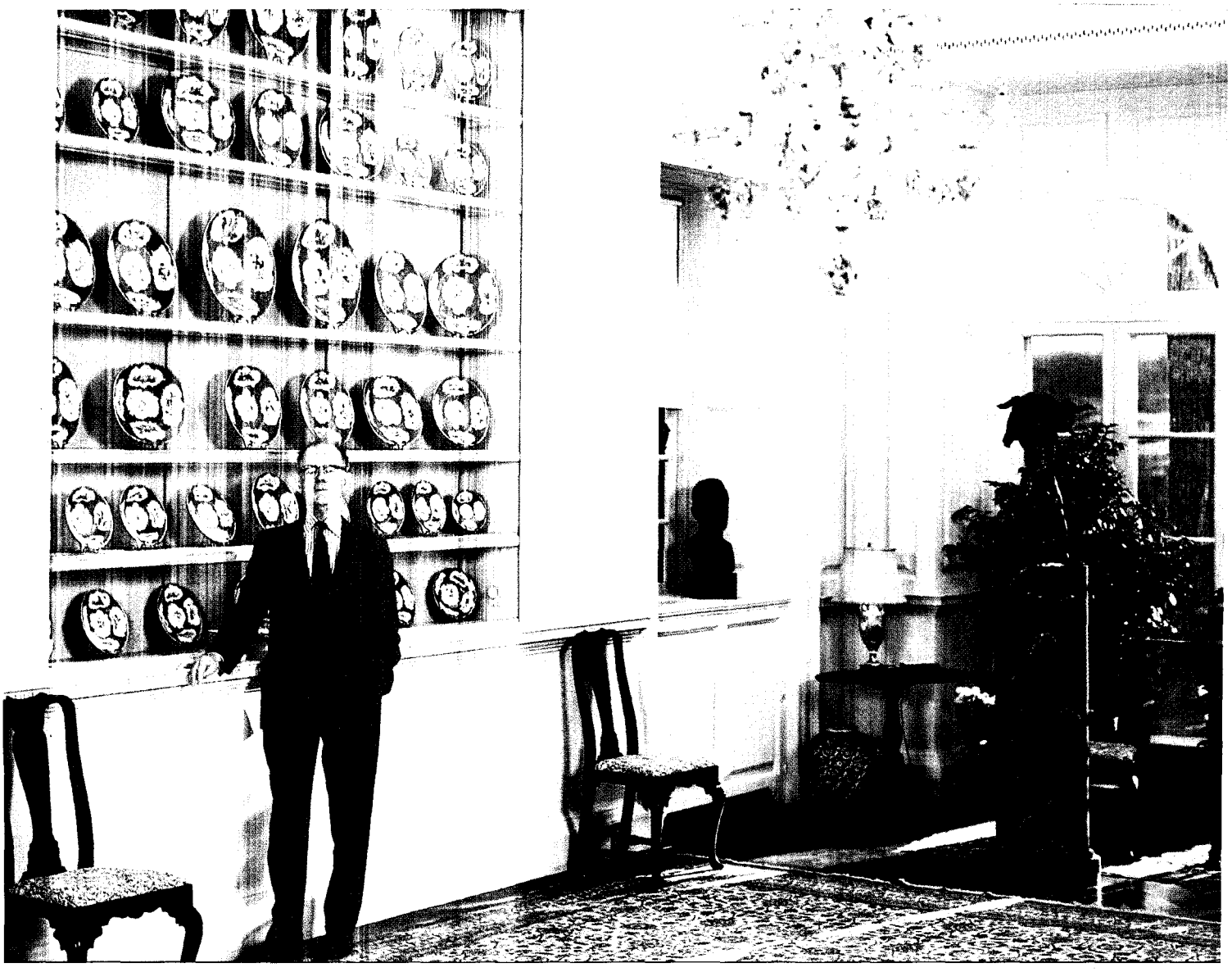

Above: Coolidge in another corner of "the big room," beside his wall filled with Meissen china. In the rear, a bust of Coolidge by Walker Hancock, and Bologna's "Hercules With Boar." Below: an unfinished painting by Rubens in which the artist's preparatory sketches can still be seen (left) hangs in the dining room opposite an El Greco (right).

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PHOTOS BY AL FX WASINSKI

around to it, the space is so vast. Not only are some of the rooms as big as ballrooms, but there are two wings, one on either side of the main house. Yet the 79-year-old collector, who has never married, filled the walls with determinedly realistic works of art from the 14th to 20th centuries.

Unlike his parents, who bought all the mediocre paintings that an impecunious old English lord wanted to unload, Coolidge set out to acquire his collection with a critical if unschooled eye. The most compelling purchase may have been a work by Peter Paul Rubens, a characteristically lush scene with some of the master's sketching visible beneath the oil. The painting, "David Sacrificing Before the Ark," hangs in the dining room. Picking the star painting is not easy, for highlights of Coolidge's collection include an arresting Andrew Wyeth ("Corner of the Woods"), a Constable ("Summer Afternoon After a Storm"), a van Gogh ("The Laborer"), an unfinished Renoir ("Jeunes gens nus au bais à Guernsey"), and a disputed but riveting Rembrandt ("Portrait of an Old Man").

Coolidge is hardly a conventional collector. No artist so intrigued him that he purchased all he could. Nor did he collect with abandon, letting his acquisitions overwhelm the house. And while many collectors such as Ethel and Robert Scull thrive on discovering new artists, Coolidge shunned that kind of adventure. As a result his collection reflects ingrained conservatism and self-discipline, rather than passion.

He had brought to the house only a half dozen paintings, among them a Sisley that now hangs in the living room ("River Scene on Seine"), the van Gogh, a Canaletto that he later offered in trade as part of the purchase price for an El Greco ("Saint Catherine"), the Constable, and a Morland since given to his brother. Coolidge collected the bulk of his 50-odd paintings over the next two decades.

Strangely enough, the house for which he acquired the art is ill-suited to show it off. Some of the rooms are so badly illuminated, especially on a slate-shadowed fall day, that Coolidge resorts to using a flashlight to view the art. The baronial dining room, for example, has as its light source a window at one end and an exquisite—but inadequate—Meissen chandelier. "The Nativity," painted by Daddi in 1335, vanishes in a dark corner. But Coolidge finds it stimulating to watch the constantly changing textures of light that play over the paintings throughout the year.

The chamber called, aptly enough, the "big room" has by far the best lighting. Spacious enough to dwarf a grand piano, the room contains a wall of Meissen china and a second Meissen chandelier. (When Britain's queen mother visited the London dealer from whom Coolidge bought the chandeliers, she was disappointed to learn that they had left the country. When she learned they had gone to the same house, she was incredulous, Coolidge relates with a chuckle.) Opposite the Meissen wall hangs the one painting Coolidge admired from childhood: "Mrs. Stanhope" by Joshua Reynolds. Signac's "Port de Saint Cast" is shown beside the Wyeth. There are also works by van Dyck, Andrea del Sarto, Géricault and, yes, a Corot, "Man on Horseback." (One other Corot, "The Reaper," hangs in the living room.) Two bronzes by Giovanni Bologna, "Rape of the Sabine Women" and "Hercules With Boar," rise on pedestals in front of the tall windows overlooking the river.

Coolidge's collection reflects ingrained conservatism and self-discipline.

Coolidge says he never read so much as an article about art but that he relied on the counsel of the dozen or so dealers he used to frequent. For instance, he bought the Wyeth unseen on the recommendation of dealer Coe Kerr, then associated with New York's Knoedler Gallery. One of his two Sisleys, "Saint Mammes Le Matin," arrived unheralded from the same dealer. And though he often visited the Wildenstein gallery in New York, the only painting he bought from the dealer was delivered to his door without notice; it was "Self-Portrait" by Augustus John. "I was a welcome customer because I paid cash and never questioned prices," Coolidge recollects. Never? "Well, there may have been one or two occasions. . . ."

Dudley Tooth, in effect, forced him to acquire the van Gogh in 1936, when Coolidge had never heard of the artist. "Tooth was a tough egg," he says. "But he was smart and he was quick and he was honest." So when the Briton urged him to buy the van Gogh, Coolidge spent every afternoon for a week in the London gallery contemplating the picture. "I finally bought it because I knew that he knew more than I did, and I bought it because I believed he knew what was good for me," Coolidge says. "He knew his business, and he was using all his knowledge to do me a favor." The van Gogh that Coolidge acquired then is the one he took with him to his new house, the one hanging now over the fireplace in the dining room.

Coolidge, who calls on bigger dealers and stops by the Metropolitan Museum of Art on his frequent business trips to New York, says he rarely sets out to buy a particular painting. "I very seldom look, wanting something. If it was something that didn't happen to be offered, I never got one," he declares, conceding an unfulfilled desire to have acquired a Cézanne and a Chardin.

An exception was "The Wreckers" by George Morland. Coolidge had seen it at Tooth's, where the dealer told him a countess had purchased it as a wedding present for a nephew. Years later, Coolidge heard that the nephew was getting divorced, made discreet inquiries and obtained the Morland. It hangs by the staircase to the second floor.

Living alone in a forbidding house, Coolidge feels no need to justify keeping his paintings to himself in isolated appreciation. "You're showing them to better advantage than museums do," he explains. "The fact that people come upon them unexpectedly is a great advantage."

Indeed, his intention is to duplicate that experience for visitors to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts following his death. There, in a gallery whose renovation Coolidge is financing, the collector wants to see that his Renaissance paintings are displayed next to his modern ones with perhaps some Meissen nearby. "What your responsibility is," says the collector, "is to see that the lovely things are put in places where they'll do the most good, where they'll be seen by people who might be impressed by them, where they'll be appreciated." ■

Malcolm N. Carter is a staff writer at *Money* magazine.

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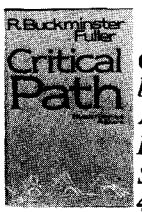
BOOK REVIEW

Fuller's Follies

by Hugh Kenner



Critical Path
by R. Buckminster Fuller
Adjuvant:
Kiyoshi Kuromiya
St. Martin's Press
488 pp., $17.95

Others look at plywood and see the wood. Bucky Fuller sees the glue. Plywood is "a plastic material reinforced by wood-fiber," and as such is one key (he wrote in 1943) to bringing the economy of wood-rich Brazil into the 20th century.

More recently, while habit-conditioned eyes were discerning brown pollution over industrial cities, Fuller's eyes perceived sulphur mines. "The amount of sulphur coming out of all the chimneys around the world exactly equals the amount of sulphur mined from the ground and purchased by industry to keep its wheels turning," so trapping it at the smokestack need not be dreaded as a "cost" but welcomed as an opportunity to help balance the world's books by recirculating the world's resources.

For the world is a metabolic system (as are you, and as am I), and our activities are successful in the long run only insofar as they minister to the larger system's ecologies. Success in the short run, which is what is measured by money, seems to Fuller considerably easier.

Thirty years ago he would make this point with talk of a corporation called Obnoxico, contrived to "exploit the most sentimental weaknesses of humanity." Obnoxico could not fail to turn huge profits from such services as silver-plating your baby's contoured and safety-pinned last diaper, for you to fill with ferns and hang in the back window of your car. That was a good joke in 1947. Today, casting his New England eye on the contents of airport gift shops, Fuller entertains a horrible suspicion that Obnoxico is actually in business.

Bucky Fuller, as everyone knows, invented the Geodesic Dome, and many know too that he coined the phrase "Spaceship Earth" and organized an activity called the "World Game." But these are details, and in *Critical Path* he marshals his best expository energies to tell us what his life has been all about. Making the world work, that's one short way of putting its theme; and if the whole shebang is not to bog down in Obnoxico or disintegrate in nuclear clouds, making the world work had better be the theme of as many other lives as he can reach.

Fuller's way of reaching audiences and readers is myth. A myth is a story, not necessarily true but not necessarily not true either, which sorts out a bewilderment of facts. Obnoxico makes perverse sense of quite a clutter. A dragon that tried to eat the sun and a ritual to deter it made one strategy for not being paralyzed by eclipses. Today's science is more consistent in its ordering of *more* facts, but doing science and postulating dragons are in some profound way the same kind of human activity.

One of Fuller's most engaging myths, directed at the question why we are here, is the creation-myth in the first chapter of *Critical Path*. It draws on many facts: the fact that we are 60 percent water, the fact that "in common only with water-dwelling mammals such as whales and porpoises, humans shed saltwater tears," the fact that selective breeding leads only to specialization, and the fact that people get born naked, with a desperate need to conserve a body temperature of 98.6 degrees.

The regnant myth is that we started with fur coats, like the apes, and evolved. Though near-hairless now, we've also evolved tailors, and there was an intermediate stage when we skinned bears. But Fuller starts from a doubt that our kind of omnicompetence could evolve. Breeding makes specialists, and it is central to his thinking that we are not specialists. He'll guess we were *brought* here: "telescanned from elsewhere in Universe," as smart on the first day as any Einstein now, but with everything to be learned.

So how and where did our naked ancestors manage? They managed as water-creatures, in South Pacific coral atolls where lagoon water was so warm you could stand in it continuously. "Crystal fresh waters poured down the mountainsides, and coconuts full of milk fell on the ground around the humans. Fruits were plentiful, and there were no wild animals threatening to eat the helpless baby humans."

That is the memory the Eden story preserves. And the dolphins? Listen: "We can comprehend how South-Sea-atoll, lagoon-frolicking male and female human swimmers gradually inbred pairs of underwater swimmers, . . . and after many . . . outbreedings of general-adaptability organic equipment, the progeny evolved into porpoises and later into whales."

So the dolphin, whose linguistic efforts fascinate, is indeed our cousin, and, with his demonstrable inability to build airplanes or use typewriters, is an object lesson too in overspecialization. (So, for that matter, is the curriculum at Harvard, from which Fuller managed to get himself expelled twice. He still sees academe as a dolphin-training enterprise.)

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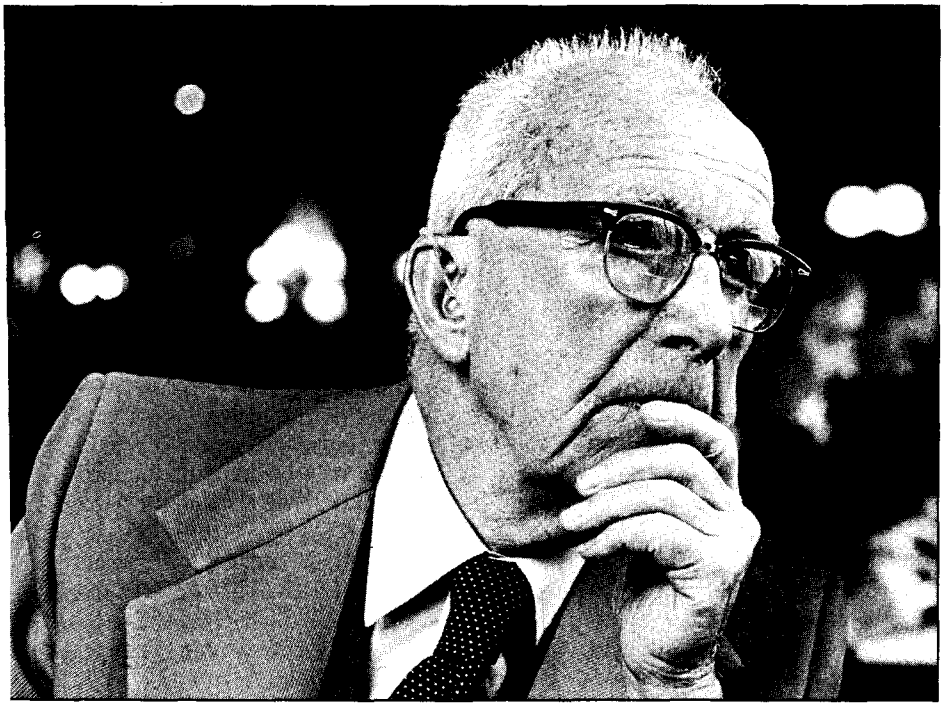
Next, technology grew up around boats; fibers made ropes and cloths for sails and coats; eventually a sailing-into-the-wind people spread forth from the vicinity of Bangkok to colonize the globe and reach the moon. Having walked on the moon only yesterday, we have demonstrated that we have the technical ability to achieve "an unprecedentedly higher standard of living for all Earthians than has ever been experienced by any." Already, says Fuller, 60 percent of us live better than any king did prior to 1900. What we now need to understand is that the plight of the deprived 40 percent is no necessary cost of this partial success.

Not understanding that, we deem scarcity normal. We burn up our savings account (fossil fuel) and our capital account (atoms)—"a spending folly no less illogical than burning your house-and-home to keep the family warm on an unprecedentedly cold midwinter night." We even threaten Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) over supplies of oil: this despite a cosmic energy income ("gravity- and Sun-distributed cosmic dividends of waterpower, tidal power, wavepower, windpower, vegetation-produced alcohols, methane gas, vulcanism") that pours in on us 400 million times faster than we succeed in consuming energy of any kind. Unhappily, "tax-hungry government and profit-hungry business" won't tolerate any energy transactions on which they can't hang a meter, complete with a man to come and read it and make out a bill.

This brings us to a less successful myth, the long chapter called "Legally Piggily," which purports to detail how governments and multinationals have since World War I euchred the U.S. into a bankruptcy that only waits to be publicly declared. The villains of this narrative are astute Wall Street lawyers, cartooned from all the starchy noncomprehenders Bucky has met in his lifetime.



R. Buckminster Fuller—"With all his vagaries, he is the best myth-maker alive."

The chapter has the defect of all conspiracy theories: It depicts a sequence of deliberate and fully conscious acts conceived by a hidden group with a rationale known only to them and to the theorist, who leans on glib assertion. "I know what I am talking about," he assures us; "[I have been] studying and working for a half-century on the assumption that this present state of affairs would come about at this moment in history." (He *knew all along*.)

You hear there, alas, not the myth-maker but the crank. It's the crank too who asserts that the wise rulers of Russia (so unlike our own) intend nothing less than the controlled demilitarization of the world. The Communist mission? Pish tush. "I have discussed this point with the Russians. They admit that a *party* dictatorship is not 'democracy' and at the same time, also admit that it is for *true* democracy that the Russians, the Chinese, and most of the people of the world aspire."

Those tame Russians at Dartmouth Conferences! He will believe ill of no one. And they no doubt deferred to him.

But let the myth-maker have the last word. "Now, in June, 1980 at 85 years of age, I have consumed over 1,000 tons of food, water, and air, which progressively, atom by atom, has been chemically and electromagnetically converted into all the physical components of my organism and gradually displaced by other income atoms and molecules. . . .

"Each one of us is a unique behavioral pattern integrity. The metaphysical you and I are not the coarsely identified 'cornflakes' and 'prunes' that we ate in the days before yesterdays. . . ."

The metaphysical you and I "qualify for continuance in Universe as local cosmic problem-solvers," and as we design our critical-path deliverance of all humanity from "fearfully ignorant self-destruction," we have the obligation "to assume as closely as possible the viewpoint, the patience, and the competence of God."

For God "seems to wish Earthian humans to survive," in part, it would seem, by learning to cherish a good myth and reject a wishful or peevish one. As more than physical beings we live on myths, must have them or perish from confusion. The fallible 85-year-old performer of *Critical Path* is with all his vagaries the best myth-maker alive. ■

Hugh Kenner's books include *Bucky: A Guided Tour of Buckminster Fuller* and *Geodesic Math*. He is Mellon Professor of the Humanities at Johns Hopkins.

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Inflated Adam Smith

by Paul Erdman

Paper Money
by Adam Smith
Summit Books
322 pp., $13.95

Last time out of the literary starting gate pop economist Adam Smith tried his hand at pop psychology (*Powers of the Mind*) with rather disastrous results: Though both of his previous books had done very well on the *New York Times* best-seller list, *Powers of the Mind* never made it.

Anyway, Smith has now returned to his chosen field, money, and the results are better. Not terrific, but better. Inevitably one compares this new effort to Smith's two previous books of the same genre. My opinion is this: *The Money Game* deserved straight A's in every respect. *Supermoney* was probably an A–. *Paper Money* is a B+. Good but not terrific.

I find two major faults with this new effort. First, it seems to me that the book started out as a group of somewhat unrelated essays (parts or particles of which were written for *Esquire*) in search of a unifying theme. When assembled in book form, the fit was often either awkward or impossible so Smith filled the gaps with a new chapter, trying to make a whole out of the parts. The result is a disjointed book.

The other major criticism is that the whole book is written in a rather off-putting pretentious manner. For reasons I cannot really figure out, Smith tries very hard to give his new treatise an academic aura. He wants to be taken seriously. He seeks to rise above his "pop" status through name-dropping on a scale that would inspire awe even in San Francisco society, where I tend to spend a lot of my time. In Smith's "Acknowledgments" alone, he manages to include the names of 45 heavy hitters ranging from Paul Samuelson of MIT's department of economics, to Burton Malkiel of Princeton's to Robert Triffin of Louvain's.

In "About the Author" he also lets us know that as a young man George J.W. Goodman, the name behind the pseudonym, "wrote a novel instead of a Ph.D. thesis." Thank goodness he did! For Jerry Goodman/Adam Smith is a writer with enormous talent who always approaches his subjects with great intelligence and humor, a rare combination. There is no need to apologize for the fact that this book, like both of its predecessors, provides us with informative, enjoyable entertainment. But a Ph.D. thesis it ain't.

So what is Smith trying to do in *Paper Money*? First, we are sternly warned that this time Smith is not providing us with a fun book. Inflation (caused, more or less, by too much paper money floating around) is not at all funny because if it continues the way it has recently, the very "social glue" that holds our society together is going to dissolve. "This book," the author tells us, "is an account of how we got to where we are" (i.e. into this inflationary mess) "and a sketch of some events that may lie ahead."

O.K.—Chapter 2—how did we get to where we are? For one thing, we are here because the damn economists, not the pop ones but the real ones, the guys who were supposed to be fine-tuning us into a state of economic paradise, have messed things up. They have done so primarily because economists in this country no longer choose to use their brains but would rather feed data into computers and let *them* reach conclusions. This is the pseudo-science of econometrics. Smith is quite right in condemning it. According to these fellows, "We have an economic system that works except for the people in it." But as Smith points out, "the people *are* in it." And there is no way that a computer can anticipate what some of the people—whether the Ayatollah or Bunker Hunt or Paul Volcker—on earth are about to do to us. So we should not expect help from the economists' corner if we are to escape from the current economic malaise. Where then?

You definitely won't find the answer in the chapter that follows this highly intelligent discussion of the state of the art of economics in the United States. It is entitled "Apocalyptic Fiction" and is in the form of a letter written by a Japanese student visiting New York back to his professor at the Kagawa University in Japan. It is so bad it is embarrassing. This "short story" starts with a taxi ride from Kennedy to Manhattan during which the driver must stop now and then to pay tribute to street gangs that rule outlying New York. Fortunately, law and order in midtown is being provided by "Disney Guards." Under their watchful eyes our Japanese tourist goes shopping. He buys a suit for $43,000. He buys shoes for $22,000. He drinks a can of orange juice that cost him $88. Got it?

Just to make sure we get the point, Smith spends the entire next chapter rerunning the story of the pre-Hitler German hyperinflation in the 1920s, which most of us have read about for the umpteenth time by now. So what's he trying to prove? Are we to conclude that America is on the edge of a runaway inflation that will lead to a breakdown in law and order and perhaps even a dictatorship?

Well, the writing is on the wall, dear reader, and this is to be taken literally

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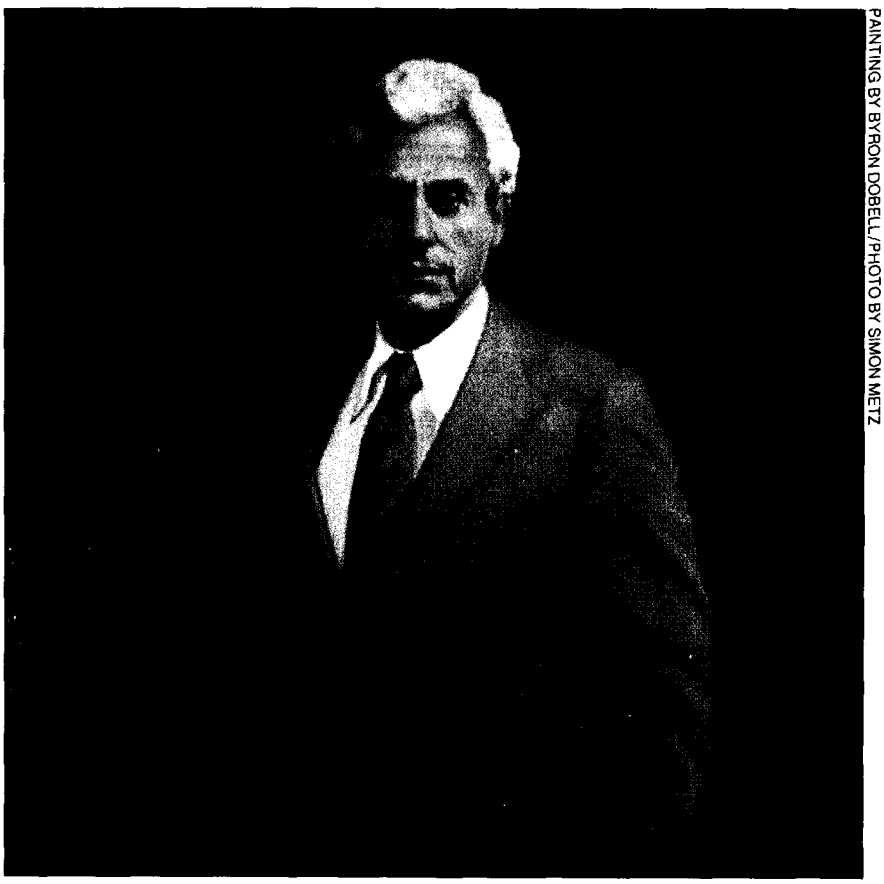
because that wall is part of your house, and houses are the subject of the succeeding chapter. "When Americans create a mania for housing," Smith now lectures us,"—not building houses, but bidding up housing at the rate of $100 billion a year as they have done in the last five years—they are losing belief in their currency as a store of value." This rush of paper money into "real" estate—is this the final warning that our social glue is about to become unstuck?

At first it would seem so. Goodman/Smith tells us how he told Dick Cavett to buy a house back in 1971. Cavett was skeptical about the soundness of such advice. Then Goodman tells us about a house off of Benedict Canyon that he had *thought* of buying way back when for $104,000. It is now listed at $1.1 million. Which shows that Goodman would have been a lot smarter than Cavett *if* he had bought it. But does this little anecdote signal that the end is near; that hyperinflation lurks around the corner in Beverly Hills? Not really. Goodman hedges. He tells us that the joy ride in houses is probably over. Their prices have gone too far, too fast. One concludes that next time he sees Cavett he is going to tell him to neither buy nor sell houses. He will tell him to hold.

What else is a hold? Swiss francs and German marks *have* been because the rates of inflation in Switzerland and Germany have been so much lower than in the United States. But will that be true in the future? Goodman/Smith hedges again. Maybe, now, the place to be is back in dollars because the Russian tanks are much closer to Frankfurt than to New York. I think it fair to say that if you are looking for clear-cut concrete financial advice as to how to beat inflation you are not going to find it in this book. But what you do find in this particular chapter is a truly excellent history of post World War II international monetary events, with very understandable explanations of such esoteric subjects as Roosa bonds, Eurodollars, floating rates, and so forth.

In regard to the central subject, inflation, Smith summarizes what seems to be his conclusion regarding the future as follows: "We are far more likely to have a soggy British-style inflation that a frenzied German-style hyperinflation featuring wheelbarrows full of money." I buy that. I suspect that when Reagan tries to apply the Kemp/Roth/Laffer tax-cut theories in 1981 the odds are as high as 50 percent that he will not solve the problem but rather create a mess here similar to that which Mrs. Thatcher has created in Britain by following similar "supply side" economic tactics. In other words, we may very well end up with *both* double-digit inflation and double-digit unemployment a year from now.

This brings us to page 143, or about midway through the book. Be prepared, for this is the point at which Goodman/Smith shifts his narrative and focus completely. Suddenly we are in the world of oil and energy and Arabs. Succeeding chapter heads are "How OPEC Started"; "Why the 'Energy Crisis' Is Misnamed"; "The Saudi Connection"; "Recycling Petrodollars." *This* is what the entire book was to be about originally. I know because Goodman called me in California a couple of years ago and asked me if I would mind if he wrote a nonfiction book covering more or less the same subject matter I had dealt with in a fictional manner in *The Crash of 79*. Since 1979 was rapidly approaching and since, unfortunately, no crash was in sight, I told him to be my guest. The results are good. There is nothing new or original in what he has to say, but he tells the story well.



PAINTING BY BYRON DOBELL/PHOTO BY SIMON METZ

George Goodman uses a pseudonym and won't be photographed (but a painting is OK).

Goodman/Smith concludes the main body of the book with a penultimate chapter on the stock market and whether or not it is a hedge against inflation. It reminds one of the chapters we enjoyed so much in *The Money Game*, but the old magic is no longer completely there. How to sum it up? *Paper Money* is a B+ book written by a straight-A writer. ■

Paul Erdman's *The Last Days of America* will be published this spring by Simon & Schuster.

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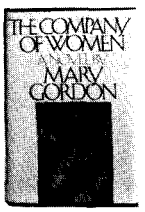
Eccentrics in Love

by Barbara Grizzuti Harrison



The Company of Women
by Mary Gordon
Random House,
291 pp., $12.95

I came to *The Company of Women* with trepidation: Having, along with practically everybody else, found so much to admire in Mary Gordon's first novel, *Final Payments*, I longed for her to heap success upon success—and feared the slackening of powers one so often sees in second novels.

No need, in the event, to fear: *The Company of Women* is cause for rejoicing. When she is at her best, Mary Gordon's tensile intelligence, combined with the almost eerie grace of her understanding, imparts to this important novel what Henry James called "the clairvoyance of passion." She raises questions of moral resonance. *The Company of Women* is not a perfectly realized novel. It has a grave structural defect—the middle sags alarmingly. But, given its scope, depth, and the perfection of its lyrical passages (which are the more impressive because of Gordon's natural inclination toward the austere), it is fair to call this a brilliant novel.

Like all novels that successfully hold the mirror to life (and to unconventional lives in particular), *The Company of Women* is so richly layered and textured that it is nearly impossible to say what it is about: It is "about" human love; it is "about" divine love; it is "about" the redemptive power of suffering, about illusions, resilience, and delusion. I suspect—though only a superficial reading would tend toward this conclusion—that many will say it is about sexism, and that others will say it is about female bonding. Catholics may be tempted to see in it a metaphor for the state of the contemporary Church. Little matter. *The Company of Women* tells a story; it tells truths.

Let us, for the sake of simplicity, say that *The Company of Women* is about the search for what its protagonist calls "ordinary human happiness."

For young Felicitas Maria Taylor—named, by her foul-mouthed, devout mother, after a virgin martyr—the search seems doomed almost from the beginning. For Felicitas is regarded by her mother, by her mother's intimates, and by the secular priest who is at the center of all their lives, as a favored child, chosen to be a vessel of Catholic orthodoxy; she is trained by her mentor, Father Cyprian, to eschew sentimentality, but also to regard reason as a "whore"; she is given to see her own clear hard faith as a witness to a faithless world. She is loved almost too fiercely; she is the repository of too many hopes and dreams. To be loved with so much possessive ardor—to be seen as a symbol or an emblem—is perhaps almost as terrible as not to be loved at all.

Felicitas, whose father died when she was six months old, is one of those children fated to spend her early years in the company of adults. With the exception of cranky, nurturant, abrasive, idiosyncratic Father Cyprian—a kind of Ivan Illyich of the right—all the adults from whom she draws emotional and intellectual sustenance are women.

At her best, Mary Gordon's tensile intelligence raises questions of moral resonance.

The women came together at a retreat led by Father Cyprian. Now, in middle-age, husbandless, manless, adhering to the letter of Catholic law where sexuality is concerned, they cannot imagine life without him.

All the women have reason to be grateful to Father Cyprian, who has rescued them from tragedy, from

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dreariness, from the commonplace. Yet he has carelessly savaged them all, in word, if not in deed. To Felicitas's mother, Charlotte, on the occasion of her husband's death: "Your sorrow is nothing to mine. I will have no one like him in my life again. At least you have a child of his loins. I have nothing. I am completely alone." To another woman: "I never worry about your committing acts of impurity, even though you rub elbows with all sorts of people, because I know you are too objective for that.... You think like a man."

Apparently arrogant, but truly self-reproachful, he bullies them, he sanctifies them, he runs their lives. They do not forgive his unkindnesses; but they see him as the agent of their salvation. Their love for him verges on the idolatrous.

As for Felicitas, she loves his hands—the hands that hold the Body of Christ. She loves even the black shoes he wears when he is celebrating Mass: They are "serious and blessed and devotional. . . at the center of things. God was that: nothing not vital. She wanted Him to come to her. She wanted to take in God.... She prayed in her soul for a light, a life of light, a life as essential as those shoes, as serious."

Of pre-Vatican II temperament and ideology, Father Cyprian leaves his Order, into which chinos and the vernacular and golf clubs and the spirit of ecumenism and words like "togetherness" are intruding. He hates "the whole sewer of the modern world, the great dark stink of it." All that is left to him is a remnant of "women whose lives had gone bad in one way or another, who came to him in times of crisis.... They were perfectly faithful." He loves Felicitas better than his own soul; he loves her as if she were bodyless.

But he even savages Felicitas: "Once she had said, her head swimming with new grass, in love with the green atmosphere, 'I think heaven will smell like this.' " And Father Cyprian replies (what gorgeous writing!):" 'In heaven there are no smells. No puppies and kittens. No fur coats. I am sure that even you will be sufficiently absorbed in the vision of God that you will not wish for perfume.' Then he stopped the car in front of Myron Haber's farm.... 'I want to show this young lady the difference in manures. She says she's interested in perfumes.' Then they laughed, and Felicitas would always remember that laugh. In that laugh she was *the other*. She would know always in that laugh what it was to be the outsider, the woman among men, the black among whites, the child among adults, the foreigner among natives. Always in her life her outrage at injustice would bring back those men laughing and the smells they made her smell."

This is the stuff of the first section of *The Company of Women*, and wonderful stuff it is. Yet alas!, no sooner are we introduced to the women, the child, the priest, than Mary Gordon closes the door on the volatile, dangerous situation she has placed them in. It is almost as if the author walks away from her own story. She whisks Felicitas away to an apparently more dangerous situation, but one that is in fact banal and predictable.

Given its scope, depth, and the perfection of its lyrical passages, it is fair to call this a brilliant novel.

Felicitas escapes—there is no other word—to a commune on the fringes of Columbia. She falls in love with a professor, Robert Cavendish, the handsomest man she has ever seen, a man whose beauty almost obviates the foolishness of his utterances. The sadistic soppiness of Cavendish makes Cyprian's rugged orthodoxy look sane and good—to the reader, but not to besotted Felicitas, who seems not to realize, in her desperate search for ordinary human happiness, that her lover is a jerk. He sends his child to the Dred Scott School, where six-year-olds perform *Marat/Sade*. Felicitas is only one of his charities. She lives with two of his cast-off lovers; he forces her, in the interest of "nonpossessiveness," to have sex with a male friend of his. Dopey Robert Cavendish wants to be black—to be Third World is to be beautiful. You get the picture.

Well; Gordon had to move her plot along. She had to have Felicitas gain knowledge of the secular and sexual world. But the commune section—far too long—lurches between parody, satire. . . and, occasionally, merciless accuracy. But we've heard it all before, and we have trouble believing that Felicitas could have fallen in love with the stupid, mean professor. (It's interesting, of course, that the most serious criticism leveled against *Final Payments* was that the heroine's sexual relationships were less than credible. It may be that this is just not Gordon's forte. No disgrace, this; but a limitation Gordon ought, if she can't overcome it, to recognize. Few writers, after all, can deal with atypical, eccentric relationships as well as she.)

So we come to the final section of *The Company of Women*—and it's a knockout. I don't want to give the story away. (I will say, though, that a chapter that begins "It was because of the bats that I decided to marry" is as marvelous and quirky as that sentence would lead one to hope.) Felicitas, who chooses a life that is "isolated, difficult and formal," does find ordinary human happiness without losing all that had once been precious to her—the women, Father Cyprian....

All of whom are allowed their final say. And what a "say" it is! Difficult Father Cyprian emerges as a great good soul, flawed, out of step with his time, cantankerous, but ennobled by his hunger for what is good, made wise by his love and by his failures of love. He does not love himself; we love him. Cyprian learns both to relinquish his fierce hold on Felicitas and, astonishingly, and with grace, to love and to accept the child she bears out of wedlock. He becomes a miracle of nonjudgmental love.

I said before that it was impossible to say what this novel was "about." Having re-read the final section of *The Company of Women*, I will say finally that it is about instinct and reason, submission and authority, the holiness of the flesh, and the awesome power of love to diminish, enrich, and immortalize. ■

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison is the author of *Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of Jehovah's Witnesses*, and *Off Center*, a collection of essays.

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BOOK BRIEFS

Fiction

The Stories of Elizabeth Spencer
by Elizabeth Spencer
Doubleday, 456 pp., $14.95

IT HAS BEEN MORE than a decade since Elizabeth Spencer published a collection of her stories, and nearly two since her novel, *The Light in the Piazza*, won her national prominence. As a Southern writer, she has been compared to Katherine Mansfield, Flannery O'Connor, and Eudora Welty, who writes a heartfelt and astute preface to the present volume. Like her peers, she knows that the secret of the successful short story is to reveal much in a small space.

But comparisons, the convenience of critics, convey nothing of the singular timbre of her voice. "The White Azalea," one of the better earlier pieces, shows her special gift for communicating the impact of setting on character: In a sensuously evoked Italy, a woman tries to free herself from the psychological ties to a Mississippi past. A more recent story, "I, Maureen," is a technically dazzling feat, permitting us to view the world through the optics of a schizophrenic woman, to see the splintered collage of her mind. Even the briefest of her male portraits are somehow detailed, vivid, convincing. But it is the women of Elizabeth Spencer, in longing childhood and youth, through marriage and divorce, in Canada or Alabama or her beloved Italy, who have inspired her finely hued perceptions. —JOHN FLUDAS

Neighboring Lives
by Thomas M. Disch and Charles Naylor
Charles Scribners & Sons
384 pp., $11.95

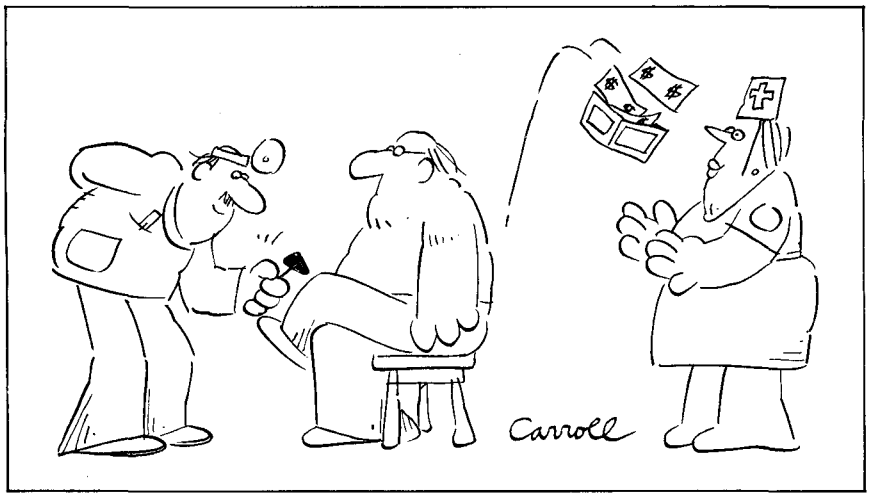
IN THE GUISE of a leisurely behind-the-scenes stroll through the Chelsea parlors of artists and authors famous in their day, Disch and Naylor offer in this new novel a stimulating draught of Victorian London. Eminently frugal, Thomas Carlyle presides at one end of the stage, with his loyal Jane serving tea, oatmeal, and divine justice to visitors Robert Browning, John Stuart Mill (whom history strongly suspects of having played the Judas disciple), the dying Chopin, and others. At the other end, bohemian Rossetti resides, a "human steam engine" that occasionally explodes.

The chroniclers allow themselves one graceful detour to Oxford with Lewis Carroll, but, for the most part, their fiction follows as close to the urban banks of the Thames as it does to the facts. This is not pageantry—peak moments in the lives of the great—but a montage of small, telling events that quietly evoke the spirit of time and place. Suicide, snubs, gossip, and petty rivalries flourish here as among any group of writers and painters, but the portraits emerge well-rounded and humane, and readers will find themselves in sympathy with frailties rather than inspecting feet of clay.

At one point in the novel, a crimson helium balloon sails across the sky, bearing aloft "the renowned Madame Poitevin" in the costume of Europa, mounted on a bellowing bull and singing "Pig's Pettitoes," just the sort of detail that makes this inspired reconstruction an entertaining introduction to the period as well as a rare find for aficionados. —LAURA GERINGER

The Collected Stories of Elizabeth Bowen
Alfred A. Knopf, 784 pp., $17.95

NOT TO BE MISSED, these 79 stories by Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1973) are a happy surprise. Her mastery of mood, detail, color, and heightened understatement (call it the shimmering suggestion) is so secure that one must dismiss her lapses as she leisurely works miracles by placing weighted characters against feeling-infused marvels of set decoration. At its best, her art is as lyric and visionary as Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, as in her drawing of a London black-out beheld by lovers in the moon-flooded "Mysterious Kôr": "Full moonlight drenched the city and searched it; . . . London looked like the moon's capital—shallow, cratered, extinct . . . you could see every slate in the roofs, every whited kerb, every contour of the naked winter flowerbeds in the park . . . . With him she looked this way, that way, down the wide, void, pure streets, between statues, pillars and shadows, through archways and colonnades. With him she went up the stairs down which nothing but moon came; with him trod the ermine dust of the endless halls, stood on terraces, mounted the extreme tower, looked down on the statued squares, the wide,



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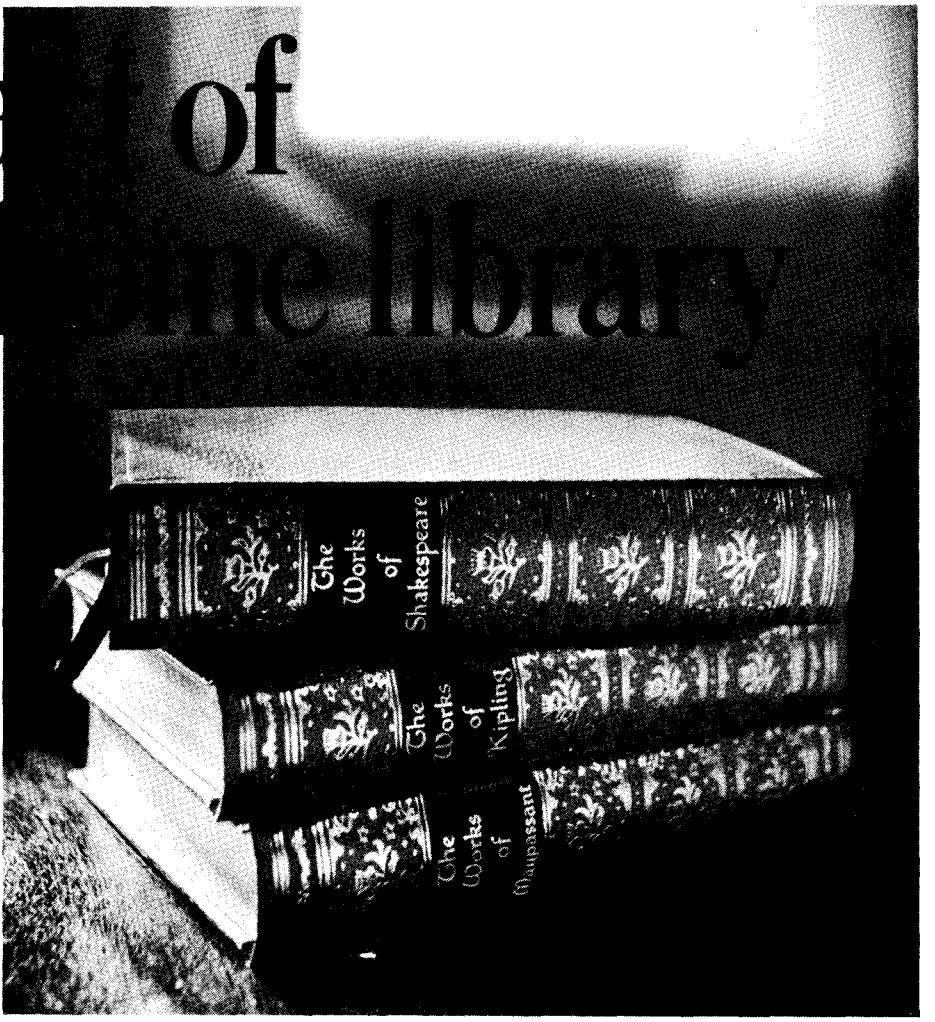

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BOOK BRIEFS

void, pure streets."

Grouped to cover four decades, the stories are as assured in style at the start as in her maturity. In one early gripper, "Ann Lee's," two snobbish young ladies go mad at a hatmaker's shop as magically perfect hats dizzy them with lust to possess. Bowen's sense of romance serenely turns to the supernatural and hallucinatory when ghosts catch her fancy. Even the realistic stories often grow from a surreal shuffling of time in the characters' lives, as though history were breaking down, rotting into phosphorescent fragments now rising through the blackness of the Thames's mud. Somewhere in nearly every story is a pod-burst that stops you cold with admiration. "Ivy Gripped the Steps," "The Disinherited," "Summer Night," "A Love Story," "The Happy Autumn Fields" are just a few of her triumphs.

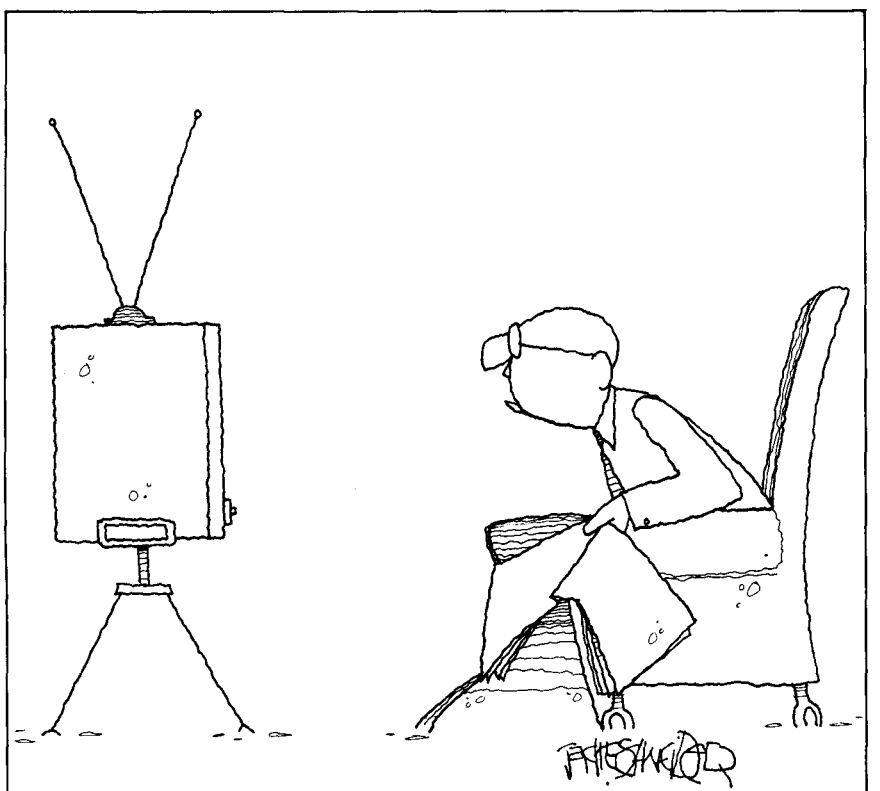
—DONALD NEWLOVE

Mary Lacey
by Maureen Connell
Harper & Row, 288 pp., $10.95

MARY LACEY leaves one with a strong sense of *déjà vu*. Maureen Connell's first novel fits all too well into that genre of self-realization and autonomy treatises spawned by the women's movement of the last two decades. There's a young heroine living in London during the early Sixties, keeping house, tending child, sharing vicariously in her husband's career, and haunted by unresolved childhood conflicts. An "emancipated" sister-in-law (named Petal) preaches independence. An abortion awakens the convent-bred Mary Lacey to the possibility of choice—as well as the inevitability of sin. And the untimely death of her brother, with whom she was orphaned at a young age, leaves her bereft of ties to their native colonial Kenya, ostensibly free now to forge a new identity.

The scenario is perfect. Unfortunately, Connell fails to evoke clearly the people and relationships around which she has built her novel. While her descriptions of Africa and London are often vivid and engaging, those of her characters barely leave the page. In Connell's attempts to illuminate personality, she seems to mistake detail for depth. Mary's repetitious interior monologues—which constitute a good part of the text—might provide fruit for a psychoanalyst, but they don't propel the novel. With more careful pruning and less free association, Connell's prose certainly could have been put to better use.

—SUSAN OCHSHORN



"Yes, I mind very much if you talk about constipation!"

Brain
by Robin Cook
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 276 pp., $11.95

YOU DON'T HAVE to be a genius to notice that Dr. Robin Cook, a surgeon and the author of the best-selling *Coma*, has stumbled on a prescription for success. Call it the "medical horror" novel: *Brain* and *Coma* are really the same book, or at least the same plot. Perfectly nice people go to their local hospital for aid and disappear. A doctor investigates and soon comes under threat. There is a message to both books—one that is designed to fit between the commercials of any television talk show. It is that science is capable of doing nasty things, and beware what the scientists will try to do in the name of science.

As a writer, Cook is frequently in need of a word doctor or intensive word therapy. His idea of human relations is "Take two aspirin." Still, the main problem with *Brain* is that Cook has spent so much time setting up the plot that the reader is let down when he discovers what the story was all about. But cheer up. In his next book, Cook can correct that error. One can predict the plot now—several young women show up at a major medical center for routine tests and disappear. . . .

—ARTHUR SPIEGELMAN

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Nonfiction

The Last Days of Patton
by Ladislas Farago
McGraw-Hill, 352 pp., $12.95

THEY'LL NEVER make a movie of this second book about George S. Patton by the late Ladislas Fargo, but if they did, George C. Scott might find this a more demanding role. Here the emphasis is not on the "ol' blood and guts" whose audacious attacks on Nazi Germany rank Patton with the great soldiers of history, but on this other side.

George Patton was both noble and contemptible. While he was at the head of his troops in battle, the noble prevailed, although the ignoble could never be completely suppressed. But once the war was over, the ugliness emerged and Farago, despite his approbation, does not blink at the facts. They are ugly indeed: inhumane anti-Semitism directed at the concentration camp victims, irrational hatred of the Russians, admiration for the Germans, and a refusal to press the denazification program he headed in Bavaria.

Yet when he lay dying of a broken neck suffered in a minor auto accident in December 1945, he appreciated the irony of such a soldier dying in such a trivial way, treated the medical staff with such warmth and humor, and accepted his fate so bravely that, at the end, almost against one's will, the tears well up. A vivid portrait of an extravagant, complex, and fascinating man. —RICHARD J. WALTON

Lucy: The Beginnings of Humankind
by Donald C. Johanson and Maitland A. Edey
Simon & Schuster, 320 pp., $13.95

OVER THREE MILLION years ago, in the deserts of Ethiopia, Lucy stood upright. Today, the fossil remains of this tiny, apelike creature still stand—now in the midst of an ongoing controversy over the origin of the human race.

The array of bones that would be assembled into Lucy's nearly complete skeleton were more or less stumbled upon by paleoanthropologist Donald Johanson. Here, with coauthor Maitland A. Edey, Johanson tells his story. It begins with an entertaining history of the scientists and frauds who shaped modern evolutionary theory throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. It ends with Johanson's declaration that Lucy belongs to a new species, the oldest known ancestor of man to walk upright.

But the truth of that declaration and its corollaries—why Lucy walked upright, how and if she was related to the hominid line; and how far back man's ancestry in fact goes—are questions still being debated by Johanson and such respected paleoanthropologists as Richard and Mary Leakey.

The author's presentation of himself as a Gucci-shoed young turk waging zealous war on the established order can be irritating. But Johanson's story is a gripping one, a mystery with no certain solution.

—ANDREW KLAVEN

Sonya: The Life of Countess Tolstoy
by Anne Edwards
Simon & Schuster 320 pp., $13.95

"ALL HAPPY FAMILIES are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." So reads the famous first line of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina.* Tolstoy's own family was of the second kind, and for this, Tolstoy—followed by a number of his children and biographers—blamed his wife, Sonya. But not Sonya's biographer, Anne Edwards.

Conceding that Sonya alienated her husband by loving social life, material things, and the pleasures of sex, Edwards insists that the family's unhappiness came not so much from Sonya's normal appetites as from Leo's mercurial temperament, ascetic moral-

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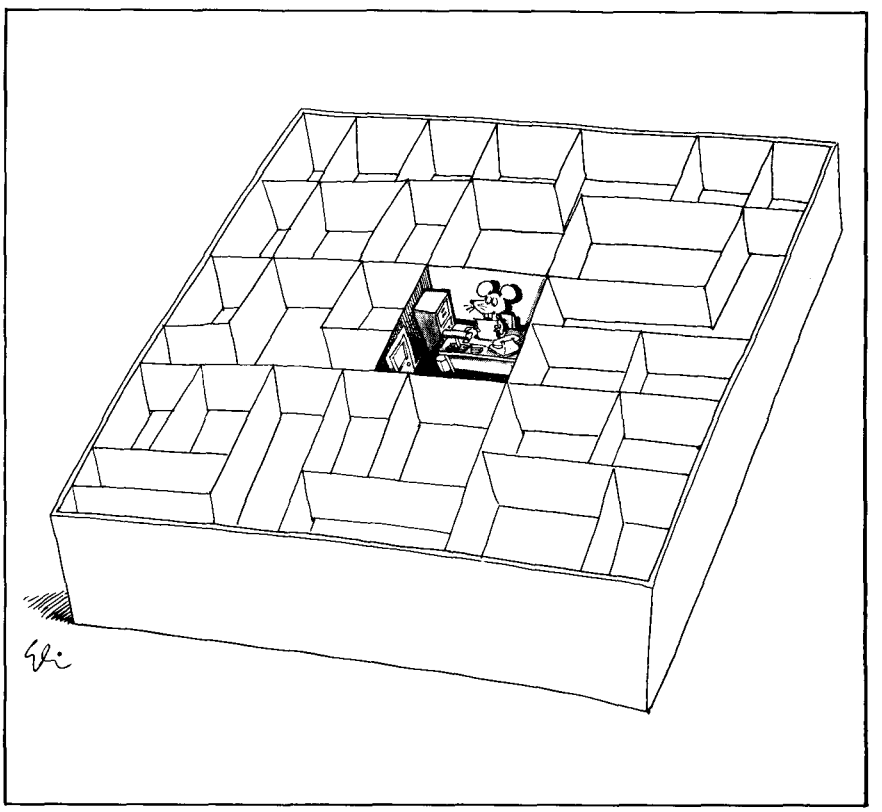

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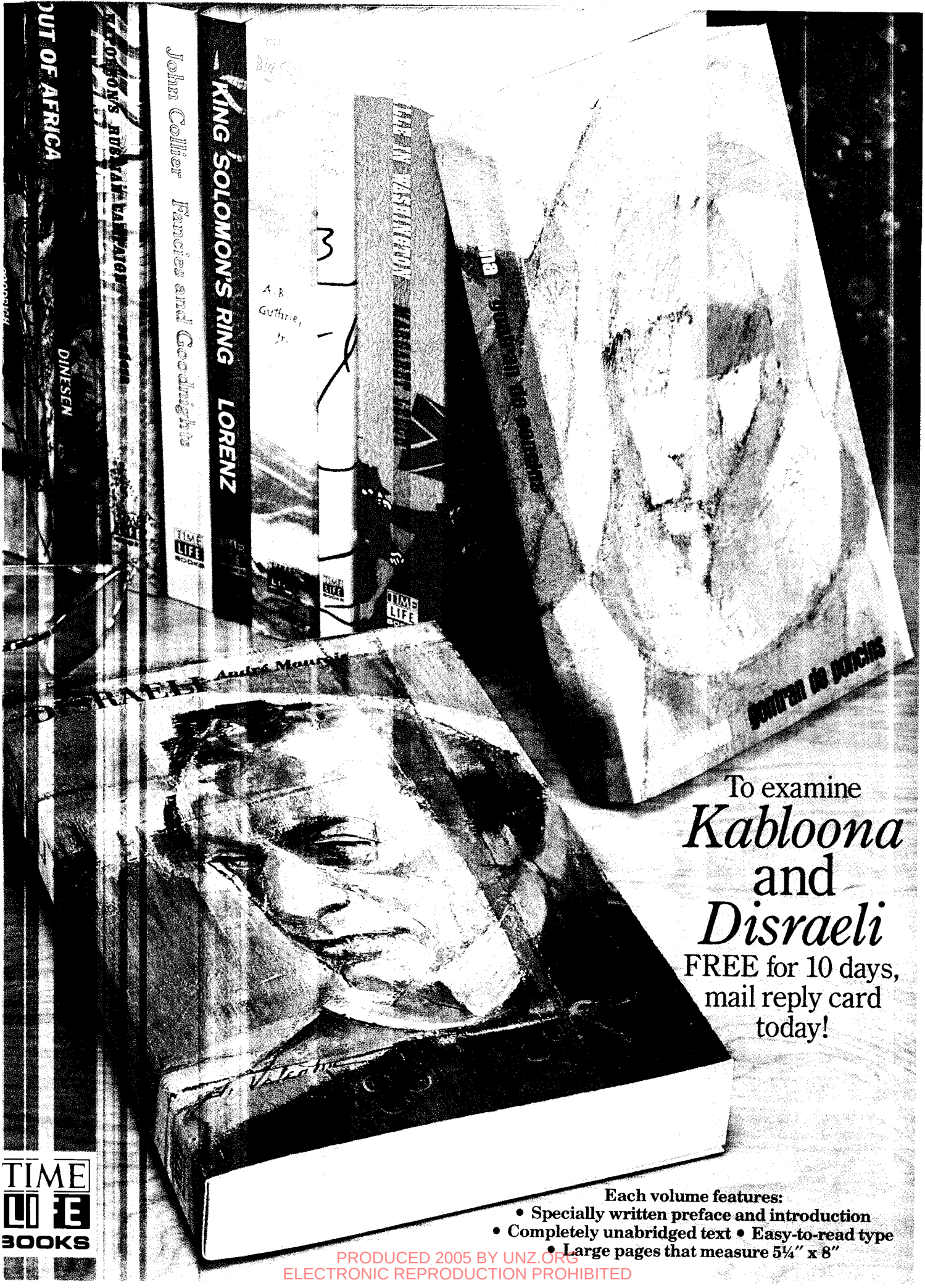

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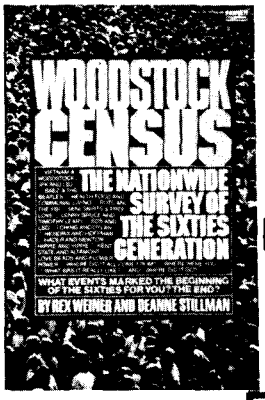
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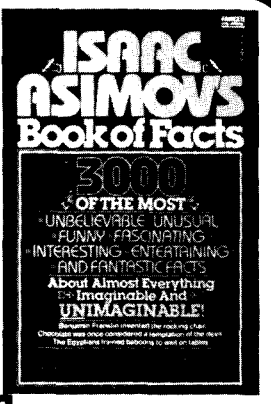

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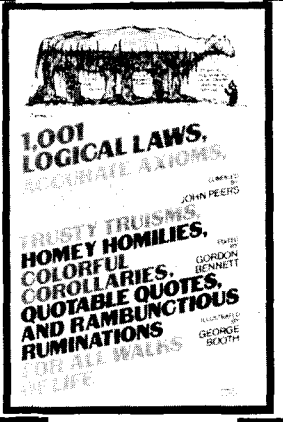

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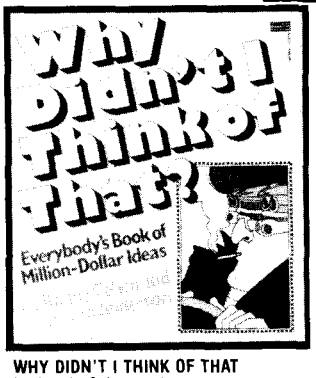

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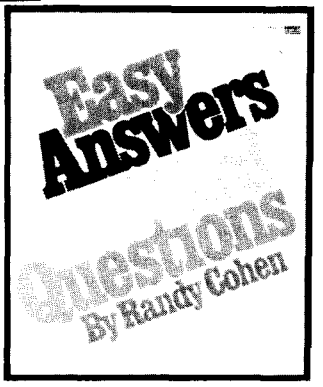

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BOOK BRIEFS

ism, and conjugal selfishness, all colored by a tint of misogyny. Sonya bore her husband's abuse, and his 13 children, year after grueling year, all the while copying out his manuscripts by hand (no less than eight times for *War and Peace*!) and growing ever more perplexed at the contradictions between the man and his works: "What a wonderful understanding of human psychology there is in his books," she confided to her diary, "and what an extraordinary indifference and lack of understanding in his home life." Perhaps, she hoped, the man's bizarre behavior would "pass like some kind of sickness." But it didn't. And finally Tolstoy left home to end his days in the sublime company of his ideals.

A sad story. And Edwards tells it with the affecting sympathy and dramatic intimacy it deserves, striking only a few false notes, as when she detects in Sonya a modern hunger for "equality" and "identity." Sonya needs no such feminist pleading to emerge a suffering female, for as this well-told tale lays bare, hers was a singular and nearly impossible role: Tolstoy's wife.

—ELIZABETH CHERESH ALLEN

The Hour of Our Death
by Philippe Aries
Alfred A. Knopf, 800 pp., $20

A GOOD SUBJECT, death. Everybody thinks about it, and almost everybody nowadays fears it. But who would have thought death has a history, that it has worn a different cloak in every age and rattled its sack of bones to different tunes? Who, that is, but Philippe Aries, the clever and industrious French scholar who taught us to see childhood anew by telling us its history some 20 years ago? Since then, Aries has been tracking down traces of Western attitudes toward death in tombs and epitaphs, wills and rites, art, literature, and doctrines going back more than a thousand years.

It was in the late Middle Ages, he says, that death first stepped out of its familiar guise as a painful but com-

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monplace reality, to start on its way to the place it now occupies in our lives: that of an eerie void remote and unspoken, honored by that morbid modern invention, the cemetery. But this passage spells more for Aries than the history of death. It also charts the careers of Western ideas about the self, society, life, and evil.

This all makes for an impressive feat of cultural history. But it is no readers' diversion. For Aries meanders through the long, mazelike corridors of his theme like an insatiable collector, relishing every suggestive find, taking turns at random, and spinning interpretations of everything he sees. Exhausting (if not exhaustive), the book is a monument to its subject: our culture's obsession with death.

—JAMES SLOAN ALLEN

Henry Ford: The Wayward Capitalist
by Carol Gelderman
The Dial Press, 416 pp., $14.95

HENRY FORD, genius and eccentric, became a billionaire by building the Model T and almost went broke because he refused to change it. Most of the events of his life are well known by now, but *Henry Ford: The Wayward Capitalist* has a few new details that show him to be increasingly autocratic, reclusive, and arbitrary. He tricked his early backers into selling out to him, then raised cash by forcing his dealers to borrow. The first employer to pay five-dollar-a-day wages, Ford later hired thugs to beat up union organizers. In the Twenties he conducted a vicious anti-Semitic campaign and was admired by Hitler. He hounded his only son to an early death, refused to introduce cost-accounting, and finally turned over his company to a former bodyguard with underworld connections.

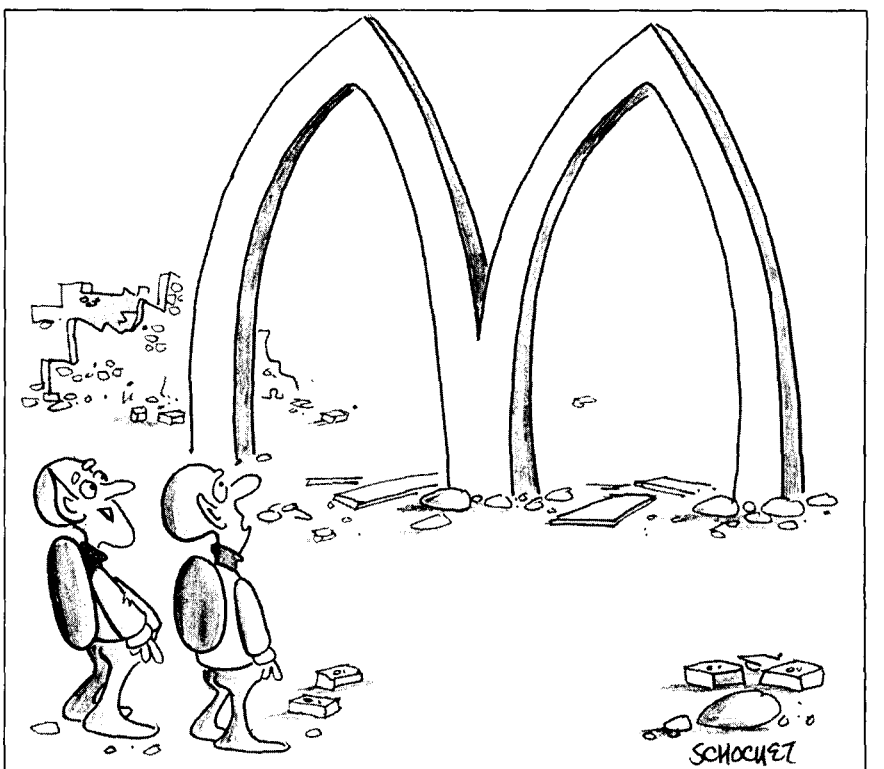
Carol Gelderman has tried to write a popular biography of Ford, but without any clear idea of how to organize it. We are given chatty pages from family diaries and society coverage of weddings. As much space is devoted to an obscure patent suit as to Henry's first 40 years. Despite speculation of the "Henry must have felt..." variety, "the wayward capitalist" remains largely unexplained. —RONALD NEVANS

Maria Callas: The Woman Behind the Legend
by Arianna Stassinopoulos
Simon & Schuster, 367 pp., $13.95

FOR MARIA CALLAS buffs this will be the richest, saddest, most story-studded and authentic version of her life to date, and the big Callas reading-fest they've been waiting for.

Maria was born in 1923 to lower-middle-class Greek immigrant parents in New York City, weighed a roly-poly 12 and a half pounds—so big that her mother refused to look at her for four days. Maria's mother, Litza, had wanted a boy to replace a son taken by typhoid fever; so Maria began life as a vast disappointment. Also she was grotesquely less attractive then her older sister Jackie (who married a Greek shipping millionaire!), for whom her voracious mother had sweeping hopes. Starved of love, Maria turned to food, was abetted by guilty Litza, and felt—in her thick glasses and fat body—"detested and detestable" (her words).

Love denied apparently drove her into world fame as a svelte sacred monster of the operatic stage, one of the great ugly-duckling tales of the century. The story is strung on her career, roles mastered, houses sung in, contracts, marriage—and non-marriage to Aristotle Onassis, for whom she had a abortion but lost out anyway to another Jackie—and on her professional supports: Maria Trivella, her first teacher; Elvira de Hidalgo, the teacher who defined her uniqueness; Tullio Serafin, her Italian mentor who led her into her greatest roles; her admiring husband, millionaire Battista Meneghini; stage directors Luchino Visconti and Franco Zeffirelli; and finally lover and fellow-recitalist Giuseppi di Stefano. The most



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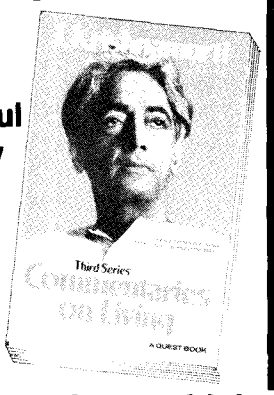

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BOOK BRIEFS

tragic irony of her life was that the man she loved the most—Onassis—was a nightclubbing boor who loved life as a confection and whose ear for great music was solid rubber. He was fond of singing to bouzouki music and smashing plates.

—DONALD NEWLOVE

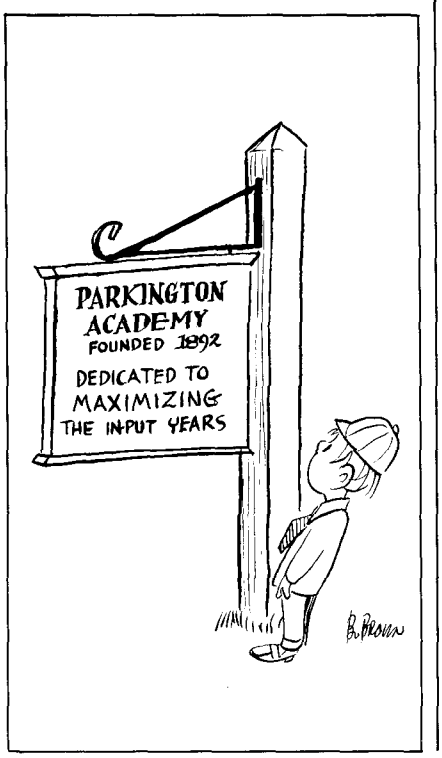
Charge It: Inside the Credit Card Conspiracy
by Terry Galanoy
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 264 pp., $11.95

SECURITY, the credit-card people would have you believe, is a simple, all-powerful piece of plastic. The early Bankamericard advertisements urged us to "think of it as money." But, as Terry Galanoy warns in a chilling exposé of the credit-card empire, banks encourage people to charge frighteningly more than they can pay for. Credit cards have become the small, cold harbingers of runaway inflation, personal debt, and the complete loss of personal and financial privacy.

Charge It details the fascinating rise of the credit-card industry: Diners Club, 1950; American Express, 1958; and Bank of America in 1965—the company that revolutionized the business with brilliant, aggressive ad campaigns. And now, the banks have devised a more insidious plan that will electronically debit the proper account after every transaction, without the bother of cash or checks. Galanoy predicts a time when the bank computer will wrest all financial decision-making from you and automatically pay your rent or mortgage, car installments, insurance, and other bills, thus helping to maximize the bank's profits.

Though Galanoy becomes overly polemical about the brave new credit world envisioned by banks, his credit-card thesis nevertheless remains valid. Most victims of the buy-now-and-think-about-whether-you-can-afford-it-later mentality would be better off leaving home without it.

—SUSAN REED



Grant: A Biography
by William S. McFeely
W. W. Norton, 632 pp., $19.95

"THOSE WHO search the past exclusively for greatness are frequently unmindful of the extent to which ideas fill the minds of ordinary people." So says William McFeely as he begins his search for one ordinary person, who was average in school, incompetent in business, too often drunk, and, finally, President of the United States: Ulysses S. Grant.

In his father's tannery, at West Point, during business failures in California, and through the bumbling corruption of his presidency, McFeely's Grant lives a dreary life, his mind filled by that most common of ideas—a daydream, really, of acclaim. And, like many another man, McFeely says, Grant found that acclaim by killing people. First, as a fighting quartermaster in the Mexican War, and later as the Union commander-in-chief during the Civil War, this unimpressive little American, with his uncomplicated strategy of

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relentless slaughter, became the prototypical hero of a nation of such men as himself.

Those who have never read a biography of Grant may not wish to begin with this one, because McFeely's portrait is somehow more one-sided than the standard good general-bad President of the history books. Nonetheless, for the reader who wants a new view of the subject, *Grant* provides a haunting, well-written examination of an unswervingly mediocre man and the nation that loved him.

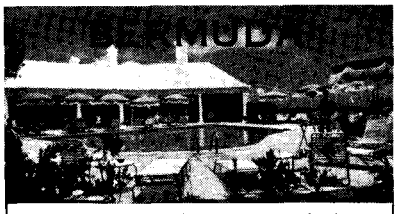
—ANDREW KLAVEN

Earthly Pleasures
by Roger Swain
Charles Scribner's Sons, 192 pp., $10

DON'T BE MISLED into thinking Roger Swain's *Earthly Pleasures* are of the hedonistic, indulgent variety. He gets his fun working the earth, not fooling around on it. And work at it he does. An amateur gardener and a biologist, Swain writes with a most unscientific affection for the mysterious delights of nature and the enterprising behavior of the plants, ants, tree bark, pond algae, and other characters in his backyard.

Each of the 21 short essays in this collection takes as its starting point some familiar product or episode of nature—the first snowfall, parsnips, woodchucks, a swarm of bees. Swain gradually adjusts the lens on his microscope to clarify his thinking and get down to some serious business: e.g., a whimsical account of a buffalo dung-tossing contest develops into an analysis of the chemical nutrients in manure and a short treatise on the dung beetle: an atmospheric ramble through a nighttime garden evolves into a short description of nocturnal pollinators and their extraordinary hearing.

Swain's gifted blend of imagination and observation enables him to see in a pile of rotten apples a battlefield where microbe meets man and the microbe emerges as victor. At the first snowfall, he sees in the knee-deep snow that brings absolution for chores undone an



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BOOK BRIEFS

interacting world of snow fleas, snow flies, worms, and algae. Fine dipping for the winterbound.

—MARY C. PRICE

Time Change, an Autobiography
by Hope Cooke
Simon & Schuster, 288 pp., $14.95

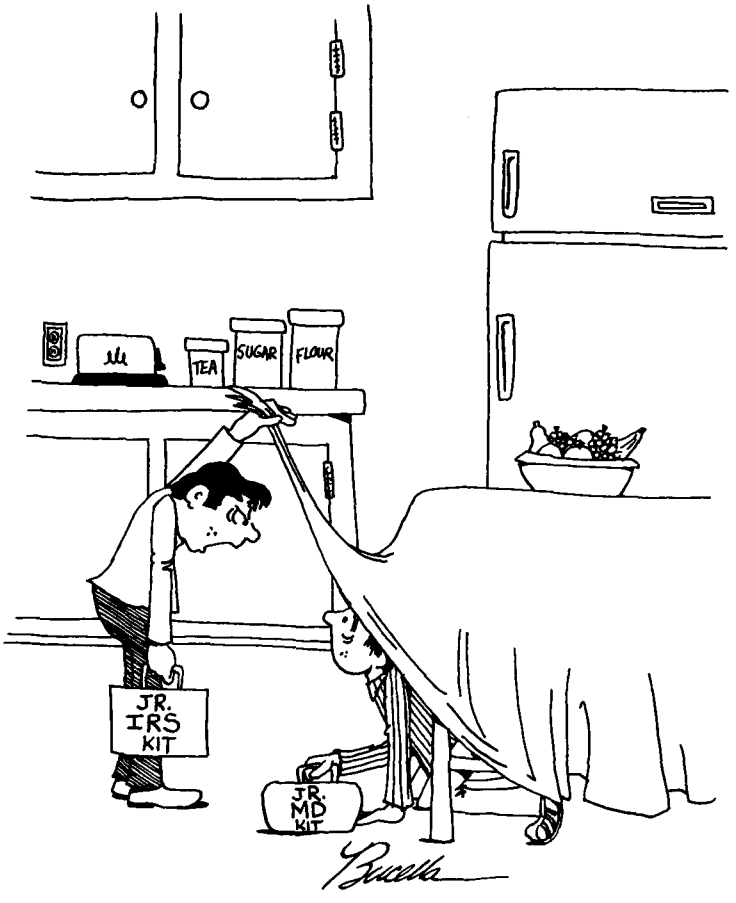
HOPE COOKE, the Sarah Lawrence-educated Cinderella who married a king (actually he was called a chogyal) in the fairy tale-like Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim, has written a memoir that asserts on virtually every page that she did not live happily every after.

Hers is a tale of star-crossed lovers double-crossed by background, by tradition, by back-biting gossips, by the ambitions of mighty India, by the remoteness of tiny Sikkim, and by the complexities of the human heart. Cooke is unsparing about the details of her life both within and without the kingdom of Sikkim. She tells of an empty childhood. She alleges that her mother, an aviatrix, may have committed suicide by taking off on an empty tank. She declares that part of her attraction to Sikkim lay in its offer of tradition to replace her feeling of having grown up hollow.

But she says that it was all downhill from the moment she married the ruler of the then Indian-protected high-rise kingdom. Among the best pages in what turns out to be an absorbing book is Cooke's account of how India removed her husband from power in a series of carefully planned humiliations.

Cooke regrets much and does not hesitate to tell us so. If the road to Sikkim did not lead to happiness, it may, in the end, lead to the best-seller list.

—ARTHUR SAUL



"Ah ha!"

His Son: A Child of the Fifties
by Bill Henderson
W.W. Norton, 144 pp., $10.95

A MODERN MEMOIR, *His Son* forsakes chronology like a fragmented novel and offers sparely written and often unconnected vignettes. Short chapters on "Ceremonies," "Summer," and "Fishing" evoke the difficulty of loving a father who militated a rigid regime of prayers and Bible-readings but ironically showed nothing but kindness and concern. Bill Henderson also portrays the contradictions of growing up in the Fifties, of trying to be an intellectual in white bucks.

The founder and editor of the Pushcart Press, Bill Henderson has an eye for telling details—the cultivated sunburn that was supposed to make a teenage boy swarthy and sexy, and the expressionless face that was supposed to ensure high-school cool. But the ironies are frequently flattened by Henderson's urgent need to understand his enigmatic father and by his tendency to draw larger meanings from simple acts. Here he comments on the unsuccessful resuscitation of a turtle: "But when we detached the turtle from the generator he was still. Pop had done all he knew how. It was the first time we had met death together." Such commentary renders the Hendersons less than genuine; the detached tone and self-conscious simplicity keep them remote. While writing this memoir may have helped Henderson come to terms with his life, reading it does not help us with our own.

—ROBIN BROMLEY

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Thomas H. Middleton

"Gift" Me a Break

The suffix -able (or -ible) is handy for converting verbs to adjectives, as in *readable*: capable of being read; *bearable*: capable of being borne; *likable*: capable of being liked. Adding *s* to -able makes a plural noun of the adjective. We've been visited by a small plague of new -able nouns recently. Of course, there's nothing new about nouns ending in -able and -ible. For as long as I can remember we've had *imponderables*: things which cannot be weighed or pondered; *convertibles*, a shortening of *convertible coupēs* or *convertible sedans*; *dirigibles*, shortened from *dirigible* (steerable or directable) *balloons*; and *portables*, which, as I recall, meant portable typewriters about 45 or 50 years ago, but then came to mean portable radios and phonographs and now means mostly portable TV sets, as all radios are now portable; otherwise they're formed of complex space-age components and called *sound reproduction systems*.

Take the *r* from portables, and you get potables. I assume we've all been invited to parties, usually fund-raisers, where we're told there will be potables. *Potables* has replaced *liquid refreshments* as the term to let us know we won't be stuck with fruit punch.

A ubiquitous modern -able noun is *collectable*. Collectables are on sale everywhere. Collectables appear to be things like comic books, old melon-ball scoops, and miniature trilon-and-perispheres from the 1939 New York World's Fair. (Incidentally, while trilon-and-perispheres are collectables, no dictionary I know has collected *trilon* as a word. A logical conclusion would be that trilon-and-perisphere was a trademark and I probably should have capitalized it.)

If you're a collector and you find a collectable you want to collect, see if it's affordable. If it is, you're in luck. You've found an affordable collectable or a collectable affordable—take your pick.

We who sometimes think of ourselves as guardians of all that is good and pure in language frequently overreact to what we see as sacrilegious affronts to good taste, good usage, logic, and even sanity, and it is not surprising that we are often unnecessarily exercised. I went through one of these overreactive fits a little over a month ago.

Last year, among the holiday season's mail, I got a Christmas catalog entitled *Giftables*. The word *giftables* made my flesh crawl. I thought it a misbegotten, misshapen, clumsy little monster, sprung from the benighted brain of some huckster whose tastes doubtless run to cute quirks like E-Z-Nuff and Komical Kapers.

The catalog was entitled "Giftables." The word made my flesh crawl.

Giftables has so much wrong with it, I told myself, that it's hard to know where to begin. In the first place, it is another unnecessary *-ables* noun. Beyond being unnecessary, *giftables* is absurd. A giftable, one would suppose, is something that can be gifted; but to be gifted is to have a gift, a talent. The merchandise in my *Giftables* catalog was mostly luggage and leather knick-knacks. There are undoubtedly advertisers who speak of "gifted" attaché cases and desk calendars, but the divine gift implied in "gifted" is debased by that sort of tomfoolery.

Well, we've all known right along that the mind that thought up *giftables* intended *gift* to be understood as a verb. But everyone knows that *gift* isn't a verb, so off I rode in all directions on my pedantic little tantrum.

After a time, I felt a little cautionary tug in my head reminding me that not only I, but thousands of others, have from time to time been outraged by some usage that seemed new and barbaric to us, but that actually could be shown to have an honorable background in the language.

So I got out my giant magnifying glass and opened *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*. *Gift* does, in fact, have a history as a verb, although it is specified in *OED* as chiefly Scottish. *Webster's Third New International* also lists *gift* as a verb, and cites an instance ("generously gifted us with a copy") from *Saturday Review*, of all sources (and I assume it is this *Saturday Review* rather than the English weekly of the same name, founded in 1855); then, in its democratic spirit of including the trash with the jewels, *WNI III* tells us that Louella Parsons once used, "gifted her with a large heart-shaped diamond."

Rationally, *gifting* makes sense. We have no other word that says *to gift*. The distinction between mere *giving* and *gifting* is undeniable. Still, I thought of going to the luggage shop whose name was on the *Giftables* catalog and telling them I was looking for a giftable to gift my wife, and I knew it would be a bitter Christmas in July before I could manage that, in spite of *Saturday Review* and Louella Parsons.

I've relegated *giftables* to my list of regrettables and forgettables. ■

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THEATER

Stanley Kauffmann

Shaffer's Flat Notes

ZOE DOMINIC

Mozart (Curry) and his bride-to-be (Seymour) scandalize an unnoticed Salieri (McKellen) with their private indulgences.

Here is Lionel Trilling on Rameau's nephew in the Diderot novel of that name: "His command of the musical repertory is prodigious.... But despite his native abilities and the cruel self-discipline to which he has subjected himself, he must endure the peculiar bitterness of modern man, the knowledge that he is not a genius." That passage could be the epigraph for Peter Shaffer's **Amadeus**. It crystallizes the theme, and it fits the play's historical moment, the era when modern self-consciousness began to form. Diderot wrote in 1762; most of *Amadeus* takes place later in that century.

Shaffer is dealing with the "peculiar bitterness" in Antonio Salieri, the once-famous Italian-born Viennese composer—specifically, with Salieri's jealousy of the genius in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. That jealousy is commemorated in the myth that Salieri poisoned Mozart, which, paradoxically, almost no one believed except Salieri himself when he grew old and dotty; apparently it was his psyche's guilty revenge for his jealousy, the guilt abetted by Mozart's early death at 35. The play investigates the theme of justice, whether it exists and can be hoped for, not in law but in the possession of artistic gifts, in the tensions between talent and genius.

This is a potentially fertile idea, but good ideas don't necessarily result in good plays—especially, as *Equus* showed, in Shaffer's hands. Once again Shaffer has had the acumen to discern a large-scale possibility, and once again he has reduced it with gimmicks. *Amadeus* begins in 1823 with the aged Salieri believing the murder-myth of 32 years before. All Vienna is now whispering about it, he thinks, and so do a couple of gossip-gathering aides whom he employs. They are given a lot of brisk, short-line dialogue at the beginning, to convey information to us, which they do, and to create a *School for Scandal* glitter, which they don't. Then Salieri steps forward to address us, not in the torment we might have expected from the "overture" but rather wryly, à la Tom Stoppard. He wants us, the future, to be his "confessors." He invokes us to appear—the house lights come on for a moment after he summons us with music—so that, on what he says is the last night of his life, he can tell us his story.

The evening is about 10 minutes along by now, and our hope for a serious play—drama or comedy—is already waning. The tricky devices, the preening witticisms, the uncertainty of tone suggest that after Shaffer got his good idea, he was frightened, and began to grasp at ways to reduce it so it might be manageable in his hands.

Of course we soon flash back, to 1781 when Mozart arrives at the court of

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Emperor Joseph II and unwittingly threatens Salieri, the court composer, simply by being a genius while Salieri is not. Intrinsically there is only one dramatic action now: Salieri's blockage of Mozart's advancement, which he contrives even though Constanze, Mozart's wife, consents to sleep with him for his help. But we all know that Mozart did not advance, and Shaffer knows we know it, so he had to develop other elements. He chose two, one factual and one imagined.

The first is the "revelation" of Mozart's true character, and it's of limited use. Any reader of a Mozart biography knows that this miraculous genius had a tough time getting commissions while lesser men prospered, and must have concluded that he was difficult. Emily Anderson's edition of Mozart's letters (1938) shows that he wasn't merely difficult, he was bumptious and foul-mouthed; other sources reveal that he didn't confine those qualities to his letters. The real Mozart, contrasted with the schoolbook figurine, can't shock anyone with some knowledge of the man, and it can't long shock others.

Still, the theatrical problem is that the scabrous Mozart, like Iago against Othello, is more attractive than Salieri; yet the play is supposed to be about the better-behaved man. Whenever Mozart leaves the stage and Salieri, who is on throughout, steps forward, we think: "Oh, yes. Nice old humdrum him." It's even worse than that because Salieri is a moral accountant: He seems to think that enough brownie points for good behavior ought to earn a man genius. When the harsh facts dawn on him—rather late in life—he assails the supposed fount of justice, God. (Mozart's middle name, the play's title, means "God-lover," possibly "beloved of God.") This is Shaffer's second dramatic element, meant to strengthen Salieri vis-à-vis the fascinating Mozart, and in itself it's an ancient major theme, the calling of divinity to account. But it crumples Shaffer. At the end of the play's first half, Salieri has a long speech berating God, which ends: "To my last breath I shall *block* you on earth, as far as I am able." If the rhetoric is empty, at least it booms; but then Salieri addresses *us* dryly: "What use, after all, is Man, if not to teach God his lessons?" The facile Stoppard-type crack blows away whatever weight Shaffer has managed to scrape up. Once again the bantam author is giggling around his Promethean subject.

The second half of the play is even weaker than the first. There's no mileage left in the shock of Mozart's character as such, and Salieri's struggle with God is flimsy, fabricated, facetious. It all just winds on and down through Mozart's death and Salieri's survival, even his survival for a couple of years after he cuts his throat at dawn following his "last night" with us.

But there are some rewards. When Shaffer isn't sweating to be cool, he can write a good line. Salieri remembers the God in his small-town church to whom he promised fealty as a youth: "an old candle-smoked God in a mulberry robe, staring at the world with dealer's eyes."

As soon as Shaffer got hold of this good idea, he began to grasp at ways to reduce it so that it might be manageable in his hands.

And the production sparkles. John Bury designed it, which means, as with Pinter's *Betrayal*, that he did everything—scenery, costumes, lighting. He distills the rococo for us with an ingeniously flexible setting and gorgeous *usable* costumes, and his lighting runs a helpful counterpoint throughout. Again as with *Betrayal*, Peter Hall directed, much or less as in the London production, which I saw: dexterously, rhythmically, with a discreet sense of character. (In one way it's too much like London. Why does Hall insist that Salieri be sitting on stage while the audience files in? At the Olivier, which has no proscenium, this was necessary. At the Broadhurst, it's just a pointless gag, tired too. The show would be better off if it began with the rise of the curtain.)

Ian McKellan, Salieri, in New York, is a rising British classical actor, which is easy to understand. He has depth and strength. Oddly, he has more gnarled strength as the young Salieri than as the old one, who is too much like a pantomime gaffer. McKellen mispronounces Italian, although he's playing an Italian-born man, and he overuses that too-precise enunciation that sometimes passes for comic acting with the English; but he has almost enough command and presence to compensate for Mozart's greater attraction.

Tim Curry, best-known here for *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, is Mozart and is fine. His abrasive aspects are parts of a man, not tags appended to him, a man impatient with the shortcomings of the people around him and with the world's inability to give him everything he wants right away. (The spoiled child prodigy, seen later.) Curry is especially moving as the sick and dying Mozart; he gives us the poignant fright of punctured arrogance. As his wife, Jane Seymour has the loveliness to fill out a two-dimensional role.

I kept thinking of the London production for two connected reasons. One, the play here has been considerably cut and altered—streamlined. For instance, Salieri's valet, Greybig, a considerable part in London played by a prominent actor of the National Theater, is reduced here to a mute without a name. Two, in London, *Amadeus* was one item in the National's repertory, with no crisis air about it. In New York, as a solo million-dollar production, it seems to strain to be this year's one serious Broadway hit.

Probably it succeeds. But it carries a (hidden?) sting in its limp tail. At the very end the ancient Salieri totters forward to address us: "Mediocrities everywhere—now and to come—I absolve you all! Amen!" Sounds grand, until one thinks about it. What power of absolution does he have, and what is he absolving them of? His legacy of jealousy, of a sense of God's injustice? Of a wish to be more than they are? The best guess may be that, at the last, Salieri is addressing his author. ■

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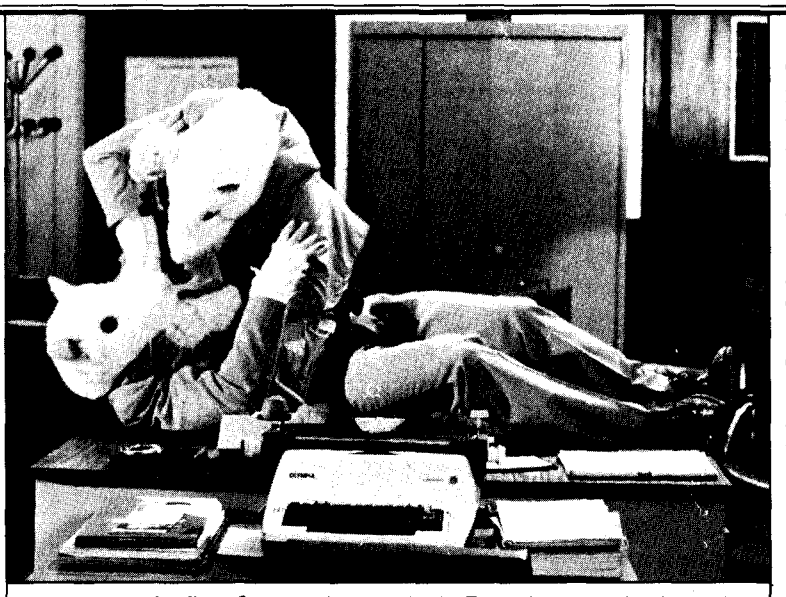
FILM

Judith Crist

"Uncle" to the Rescue



In *Mon Oncle d'Amérique*, director Alain Resnais symbolically depicts two competing characters as laboratory rats under stress, fighting.

In this winter of our multi-million-dollar cinematic discontent, the odiousness of comparisons comes clear and there's a propensity for exploring the obvious, starting, perhaps, with a "what if...."

What if *The Jazz Singer* had been made originally as an all-silent film in 1925 or all-talkie in 1934, instead of emerging as a milestone movie with song and bits of dialogue in 1927? It would have been forgotten as just another period shmaltzer, as simple-minded as Samson Raphaelson's original play, just as Danny Thomas's 1953 remake thereof has gone into limbo. And it would have prevented Laurence Olivier's current entrapment in a second remake that would have made his doing a Preparation H television commercial a class act by comparison. The current **Jazz Singer** (in which not a jazz note is struck or sung) stars Neil Diamond, a fortyish pop recording star making a ludicrous dramatic debut as a cantor's twentyish son seeking showbiz fame; Olivier is his dialect-laden daddy (in his linguistics "bean gachoo" apparently means "being a Jew") who, it seems, winds up a pop-rock fan because his grandson has "not only mama's smile but your eyes, Yussel—my son!" The film, which looks like an animated series of cut-rate album covers, is completely without contemporary sense of significance or a suggestion of taste. You don't have to be Jewish to despise it—but it helps.

What if we called a moratorium on bringing pure cartoon characters to human life? I speak not of *Superman* or even the far, far lesser *Flash Gordon* features (derived from "realistic" comics) but of the current **Popeye** and eventual *Annie*. It was, in fact, when the bidding for screen rights to the latter passed $10 million that producer Robert Evans turned his attention to the Elzie Segar *Popeye* strip, and, some $20 million later, brought forth 114 minutes of film directed by Robert Altman, written by Jules Feiffer, and boasting an unmemorable score by Harry Nilsson. It doesn't quite encompass the pleasures of any of the 5- to 10-minute animated cartoons that Max Fleischer produced in the Thirties and Forties. After a dour hour and a half of awkward slapstick and unpleasant relationships, the plot boils down to a simple chase-and-rescue and some of the cartoon's original esprit filters through, coming to joyful finale with the classic non-Nilsson Popeye song. Robin Williams's Popeye remains very much a makeup-man's triumph, but Shelley Duvall's Olive Oyl steals the show (she is the only character to attain human dimension, undergoing emotional changes denied the others), while scene after scene is stolen by Swee'pea, an Altman grandchild of irresistible appeal. The movie will undoubtedly keep children relatively unrestless most of the way, but adults may well ponder the purpose of it all—let alone the complex structure of the town of Sweethaven, built in Malta, featuring 19 four-sided structures made of wood imported from Austria, with "hand-split" cedar shingles from British Columbia, and none of it magical or amusing.

What if Neil Simon and a number of lesser talents faced up to the fact that the farces of the Thirties cannot be brought to the screens of the Eighties without Cary Grant? If so we wouldn't be stuck with the clunkeries of, say, **Seems Like Old Times**, a very determined effort to recreate the pleasures of such Grant vehicles as *My Favorite Wife*, *The Awful Truth*, even—call it chutzpah—*His Girl Friday* and *The Philadelphia Story*. On hand are Goldie Hawn—a fair enough (nay, lavish) latter-day replacement for Irene Dunne, even Rosalind Russell, if not Katharine Hepburn—as a social-conscience lawyer, and Charles Grodin, a goodly latter-day Ralph Bellamy type, as her district-attorney husband—but where's Cary? Chevy Chase, as Hawn's

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madcap ex-husband, has an appeal of his own (*Foul Play* displayed it) but it is submerged in a shrewdness and eye-to-the-big-laugh approach that ill become the farceur. One can't do triangular farce with the main man missing.

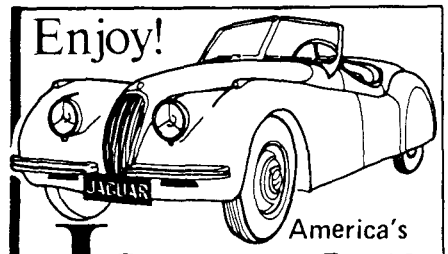
What if a director got his "intellectual" science-fiction sights set and probed states of consciousness with the serious interest with which, say, Stanley Kubrick probed outer space in *2001*? We wouldn't be stuck with a schizophrenic mess like **Altered States** (from which director Arthur Penn departed early on, leaving Ken Russell to impose his own excesses on Paddy Chayevsky's screenplay of his novel—and from which Chayevsky has removed his name, leaving "Sidney Aaron" to take the blame). What starts out as a jargon-ridden but fascinating story of a "flakey" psychophysiologist, Eddie Jessup, going in search of his "original self," winds up a sort of "Dr. Jessup and Mr. Hyde Go to Harvard Medical School." Instead of science fiction, we're given endless LSD-oriented trips and a lapse into the staler stuff of horror movies. Big news is that a primal scream can reduce a boiler-room to a shambles.

So the ultimate what-if becomes—if only *our* uncle in America would turn moviemaker! That American uncle has been a legendary character throughout Europe for more than a century: He's the emigrant who struck it rich and who, by legacy or by his return, will set all to rights for those he left behind. This embodiment of the hope for happiness is referred to in and provides the title—**Mon Oncle d'Amérique**—for Alain Resnais's wise, witty, compassionately perceptive, and wickedly funny consideration of that rat race known as the human comedy.

There are, in fact, moments when laboratory rats mirror the three leading characters in the "scientific" framework in which Resnais has enclosed this most accessible and certainly most lighthearted of his films (which include *Hiroshima, mon Amour*, *Last Year at Marienbad*, *Muriel*, *La Guerre Est Finie* and, most recently, *Providence*). Much in the 18th-century manner of a Henry Fielding, Resnais and his screenwriter, Jean Gruault, have interspersed their story with commentary by Dr. Henri Laborit, the behavioral scientist, concerned with inhibition, social instinct, survival. Theirs is a positive story of the basic struggle in being alive. It is relevant that Gruault—who wrote the screenplay for Truffaut's *The Wild Child* to show, he said, "what became of a boy who was completely cut off from society"—has explained that "here, by means of Laborit, we would show what becomes of people who developed amid human relationships."

The focus is on three people from entirely different walks of life whose paths ultimately converge, their lives traced from childhood, their careers covered in detail. Through each, Resnais, with a wry probe and, one suspects, a grin, explores the social tactics and personal weapons to which we resort from childhood on to make our worldly way. Gerard Depardieu is the farmer's son who rebels and becomes a small-company executive, only to wind up as an ulcer-ridden cog on a corporate wheel; Roger-Pierre is of the provincial bourgeoisie, bound for success in literature, politics, or both; Nicole Garcia, child of a Communist worker, runs off to be an actress and winds up as an industrial troubleshooter. The last two meet by accident and part by deceit and the third link-up comes in crisis.

Don't be thrown by the Laborit cachet. What we're lured into is a deep involvement with three interesting though ordinary humans. The commentary allows us pause from time to time to consider the angers, instincts, amours, self-absorption, and aggressions that propel us. For these contemporary folk it's movie-star time when it comes to idealized role models, with flashes from films with Jean Gabin (for Depardieu), Danielle Darrieux (for Roger-Pierre) and Jean Marais (for Garcia) providing guiding light. That "American uncle" provides a distant security. Only with understanding themselves can they break the mold of their patterned behavior—and I choose to think, as this exhilarating, cinematically adventurous collage comes to its end, that at least one of the trio is fighting out of the behaviorist's bag, onto the road to wisdom. ■



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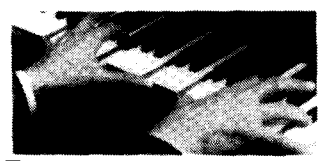

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DANCE

Walter Terry

Baryshnikov Scorecard

Mikhail Baryshnikov has been at the helm of the **American Ballet Theatre** (*SR* December 1980) for only a matter of months. It is too soon to determine to what degree he will change the 40-year-old company but certain characteristics of his directorship are already clear. At ABT's first performances under his aegis last December in Washington, he was called upon to face and conquer a crisis when Gelsey Kirkland and Patrick Bissell, two of the principals, failed to appear for full dress rehearsal and were dismissed for "gross breach of contract" by Ballet Theatre Foundation. The opening-night program went on as planned the next evening, with Miss Kirkland replaced in *Pas d'Esclave* by an 18-year-old corps de ballet member who had yet to dance with the company in any capacity. Her partner was the Bolshoi Ballet defector, Alexander Godunov.

The assigning of young and inexperienced Susan Jaffe to *Pas d'Esclave* promises a new accent on youth. Trained in the Ballet Repertory Company, which is generally regarded as ABT's junior group, Miss Jaffe did a commendable job. An absolutely first-class performance was given by Robert La Fosse, also a corps de ballet dancer, who was cast in the title role of George Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*.

With La Fosse in *Prodigal Son*, Baryshnikov cast the company's prima ballerina, Cynthia Gregory, in the role of the Siren. In ballet protocol, this is rather like asking a four-star general to serve under a corporal. But Baryshnikov's judgment was confirmed on all counts: Not only did La Fosse dance the youth with physical bravado, passion, a wonderful erotic curiosity and, ultimately, the poignancy of utter disillusionment, but Miss Gregory was absolutely triumphant as the Siren, the finest interpreter of the role I have seen in decades of watching this ballet. Her sensuality was the lethal sinuosity of the serpent that weaves around its prey and crushes it to death, and her very presence—tall, harsh of visage, imperiously predatory—seemed to personify a biblical embodiment of evil.

Elsewhere in programming, one would find stars and corps members fraternizing and this would appear to be a Baryshnikov plus, for while giving his top-echelon artists new challenges in new roles, he is encouraging junior talent to try its wings. This approach does not, and must not, diminish the justly earned privileges of rank, but it does allow junior talent to make an on-stage bid for promotion.

Less felicitously, Baryshnikov is moving the ABT backward to Soviet-style ballet.

A less felicitous direction is a move backward in choreographic aesthetic to the Soviet-style ballet from which Baryshnikov himself elected to escape. The *Pas d'Esclave*, attributed to Marius Petipa when the great old master updated Mazilier's French *Le Corsaire* (not to be confused with the famous *Le Corsaire* pas de deux to music of Drigo), is more likely the work of Soviet choreographer Vakhtang Chabukiani. This version, staged by Baryshnikov, is made of very inferior choreographic stuff and is even worse when removed from its context in Act I of the ballet.

The Soviet style also crept into a performance of Michel Fokine's *Les Sylphides*, a ballet that has long been something of an ABT trademark. The great Russian ballet reformer spent his last years with the then-young and formative Ballet Theatre and bequeathed to it his final personal staging of his masterwork. Although *Les Sylphides*, under the title *Chopiniana*, has long been performed in the Soviet Union, it should be remembered that Fokine's major creations were done for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes outside of Russia and that much of Fokine's teaching of the "Fokine style" was done in America. Thus, in the first *Les Sylphides* under Baryshnikov, the ballet's male solo (danced by Baryshnikov himself) was not the one performed by ABT in the past but the solo used in *Chopiniana*. Nor did Baryshnikov himself have the elusive Fokine style. Yes, he was brilliant, but brilliance has no place in this softly crepuscular ballet. The phrasing tended to be bravura rather than lyrical, and the head was thrown back with the elan of a proud young hero, rather than held, as would have been more appropriate, in the contemplative repose of a poet.

Some of Baryshnikov's Soviet style brushed off on the dancers. For example, in the famous "leaping" Mazurka for a danseuse in the early measures of *Les Sylphides*, Cheryl Yeager (a gifted corps de ballet dancer accorded this principal assignment) performed the series of *grands jetēs* in the split-jump manner of Soviet ballet rather than in the ascending and descending arcs of elevation that Fokine desired and, in fact, taught to his pupils. Elsewhere in this neatly executed *Les Sylphides*, the Fokine purist would have noted that the ever-so-delicate *petit piquē en avant* that should come a split second before the

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MARTHA SWOPE

Among ABT's new successes: Gregory and La Fosse in *Prodigal Son*; (inset) Jaffe and Godunov in *Pas d'Esclave*.

repeated *arabesque posēs* was omitted, which is rather like leaving out a grace note in music where the composer intended one to be.

Soviet sharpness and bravura, however, served Baryshnikov well in his staging of Petipa's *Raymonda* (divertissements from Acts II and III). Especially good were the so-called "national dances," which Europeans do far better than we do and Russian ballet artists do best of all. Baryshnikov is already seeing to it that his dancers receive definitive instruction in this area, and the massed *Mazurka* and the *Grand Pas Hongrois* in this very loosely knit *Raymonda* potpourri were its special highlights.

It is Baryshnikov's hope, as it was that of his compatriot, Natalia Makarova, in her ill-fated Broadway season with her new Makarova and Company, to strengthen and polish American dancers in Kirov style, Petipa era ballets. But there are dangers inherent in this move. Though the tradition instituted at the old Maryinsky Theater, now the Kirov, was once the envy of the ballet world, the company has changed over the years. Vulgarisms of the Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet and other Soviet dance influences have tended to corrupt, stylistically and choreographically, the Kirov's purity. Therefore, unknowingly, Baryshnikov is introducing to his new American charges some of the less desirable characteristics of today's, not yesterday's, Kirov.

The long reign of Lucia Chase, who guided ABT for 40 years, has just ended, and it is still too soon to say what the new monarch will do. I have set down here certain directional signs that are already penciled in—if not yet marked with indelible ink. Some of them look good, some questionable. Mikhail Baryshnikov has long displayed as a dancer his eagerness to master all forms of dance. That he and Makarova tend to fall back on the very heritage they left behind them is understandable, if regrettable. But since he encouraged two young Americans to assume major roles on his opening night, urged a great American ballerina to appear in a supporting role in a Diaghilev era ballet (and witnessed her triumph), and since the highlight of the first programs was a rousing, lusty and loving performance of Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, the future of one of America's great dance troupes seems to be in good hands. ■

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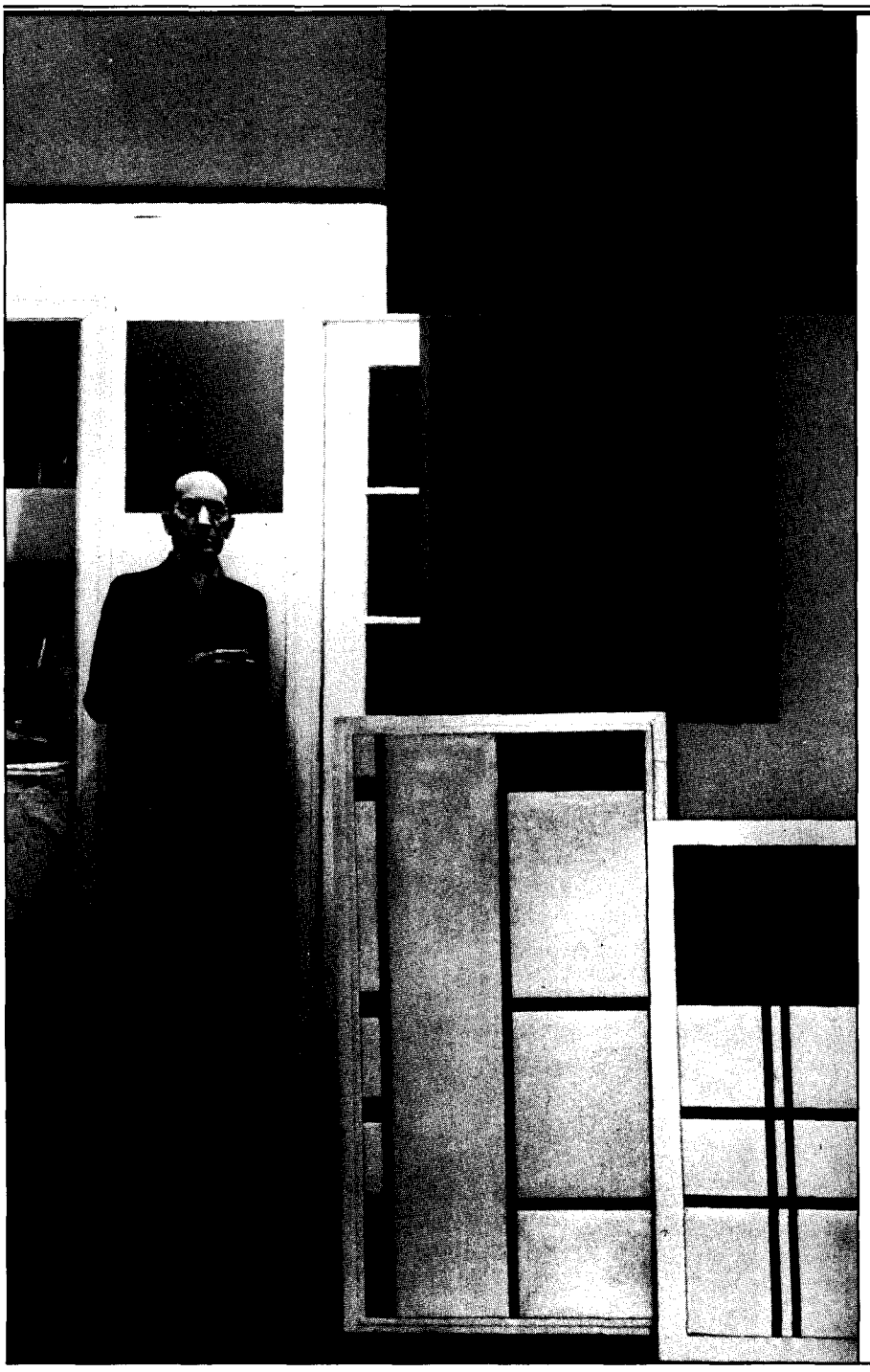
PHOTOGRAPHY

Owen Edwards

The Art in Newman's Artists



Photographers have long been attracted to painters, both as friends and as subjects. Though some of that attraction is due no doubt to the similarity of their artistic pursuits (however tenuous that may be in fact), I suspect that the prime motive is nothing more exalted than plain envy. The creation of a photograph seldom takes more than a few basic adjustments and a click, and most methods of printing are thin on sensual pleasures. It's not hard to imagine the longing that might rise up in a photographer when he watches a painter like, say, Jackson Pollock leap about on a canvas, streaming bright lines of color, not so much in touch with the muse as possessed by her. There stands the man with the little picture machine, a wallflower at the orgy, no less a lover of material and its delectable feel than a painter or sculptor, but bound to a medium in which spontaneity and joyful abandon have no place.

If they cannot *be* painters (though many try, mostly with unhappy results) photographers can at least associate with their seemingly lustier brethren, and, of course, take pictures of them.

Perhaps no photographer has stalked painters and sculptors so relentlessly as Arnold Newman, whose recent large exhibition at Manhattan's Light Gallery, and book, *Artists*, just published by the New York Graphic Society, strikingly establish him as the visual Boswell to a glittering host of brush-and-chisel Johnsons.

Newman's style of portraiture is that of a characterist. He endeavors in his pictures to present some indication of who and what his subject is; to tell, with props and ambience, a terse but

Newman's photos of (left) Piet Mondrian, 1940, and (opposite) Edward Hopper, 1960.

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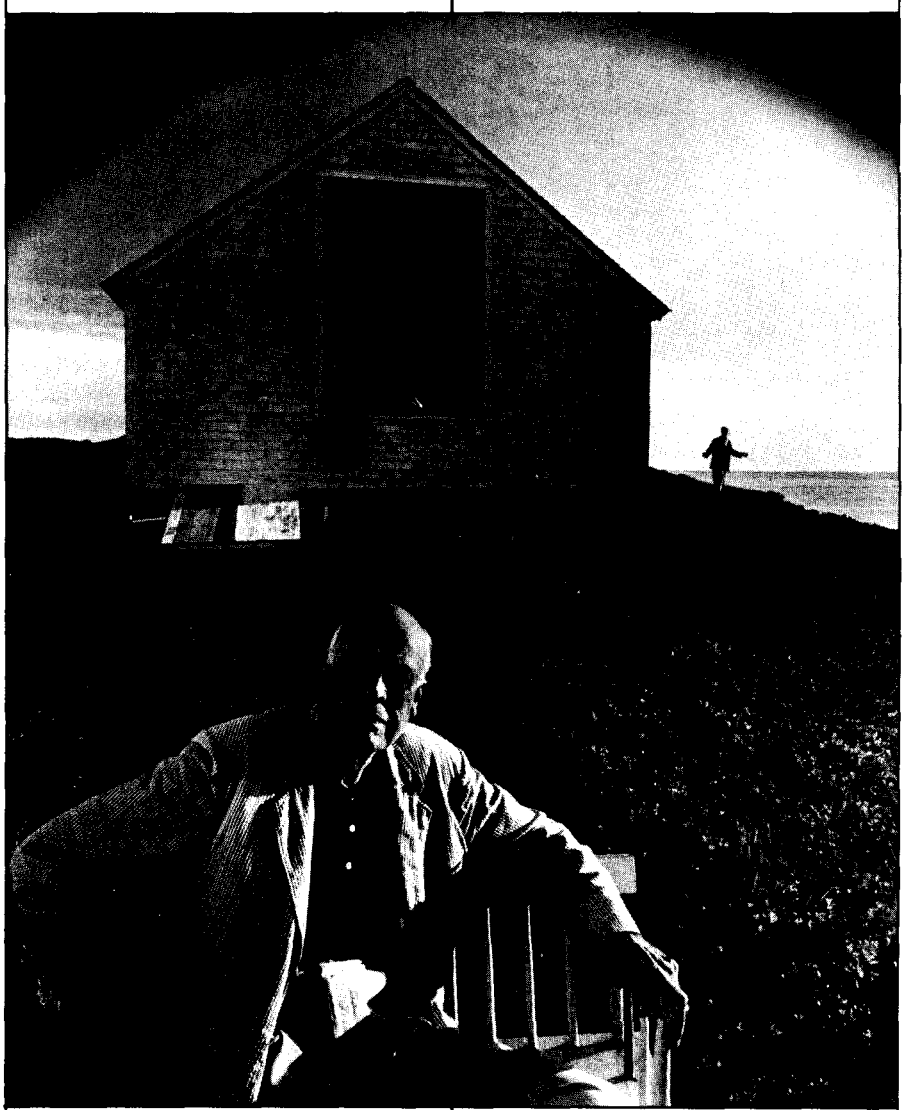
definitive story about the man or woman being photographed.

With painters, Newman seems able to transmit a quality which, I hazard a guess, attracts and fascinates him: a singular emission of pure, unmistakable physicality that resonates in the work of his subjects. It is a sign of Newman's control that, with only a few exceptions, he manages to express his own feeling about a given painter's presence without creating men and women who look as if they're being forced to play roles. Since, as we all know too well, the command from a photographer to "just be yourself" is near to paralyzing, what we have in a portrait of Jackson Pollock looking like a dervish reluctantly at rest, is not necessarily the painter in his natural state, but Pollock as Newman believes him to be (or wishes he were).

For a photographer like Newman, who depends for effect and revelation on surroundings and material clues, painters are infinitely more forthcoming than, for example, writers. They show themselves in their work, and their working places are more likely to manifest their characters than those of other creators (what could be less revealing than an IBM typewriter?). Newman makes telling use of both the art of his artists and the happenstance odds and ends with which they surround themselves. Thus, Pollock squats broodingly amid a gaggle of open paint pots, seemingly stared at by a prophetic skull; Giacometti, with all the craggy character of his late figures, stands against a chipped and spattered wall that any Abstract Expressionist would be proud of; and Mondrian, impeccably suited, as cool and distant and severe as his masterpieces, poses in a room that is all straight lines and angles, his canvases blending imperceptibly with place and personality.

Newman sometimes plays a risky game of whimsically adapting the style of the artist in question. When this ploy fails, as it does in a grotesquely distorted collage of Andy Warhol, the cause is simply the triumph of a gimmick over Newman's own high craftmanship. But he succeeds at these stratagems surprisingly often. He photographs Dubuffet's beautifully formed, shaved head against a vaguely circular splotch of dark paint on a wall, so that the painter ends up outlined with one of his own trademark borders; and we end up with Dubuffet *as* a Dubuffet. Similarly, Jasper Johns sits before a wall on which are mounted, in a straight line, a knife, fork, and spoon. Just as the silverware becomes art by being on a wall and not a table, Johns becomes a Johns by being part of the pop composition.



The characterist approach always poses the risk of being hackneyed. But Newman is too demanding of himself to indulge in cliches more than once in a great while.

The notion that the camera can tell us the unalloyed truth about people and events has, quite justifiably, suffered from the skepticism of an audience that is both sophisticated about photographs, and surfeited with them. We have come to suspect that no photograph can show us more than a world of surfaces. More and more photographers are stripping their subjects of props and familiar surroundings, preferring to stand them before seamless white paper and let merciless strobe lights reveal—warts, pores, and all—that surface which has begun to seem photography's only rightful province.

But Newman will have none of that. He may or may not truly believe that he can show us "the real Picasso," but he steadfastly refuses to abdicate his role as interpreter. The artists Newman photographs may be their own creations, or they may be his, but they are rarely less than fascinating. ■

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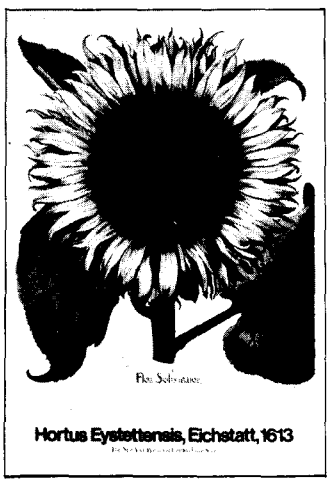
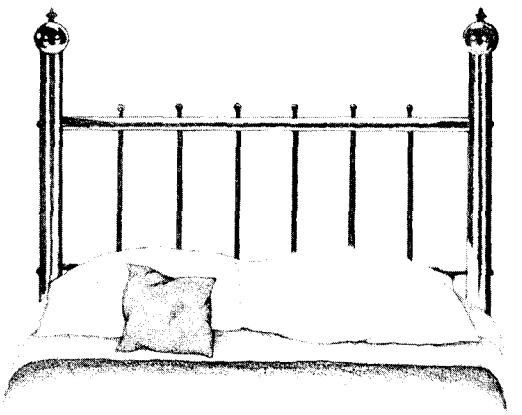
POSTER GARDEN

The sunflower represents the beauty and bounty of nature. Its shape and color nearly mirror its maker, the sun, and its seed is the manna of health-food lovers. If nature has moods, the sunflower is a happy plant. Art certainly has moods, and if ever a graphic could brighten the wall of a home, it is this sunflower reproduction, by a 17th century artist from the Rare Book Collection of the New York Botanical Garden, our nation's foremost horticultural institution. When brought back to Europe after its discovery in America circa 1569, the sunflower inspired this exclamation, "Joyfull newes out of the new founde worlde." This impeccably printed color reproduction in vivid shades of green, yellow, and brown measures 24" x 36" and can be purchased unframed for **$10.50** ($2.45) #SRA25.



Hortus Eystettensis, Eichstatt, 1613

TOP BRASS



A brass headboard is much coveted these days by lovers of antiquity, but the price of a solid brass headboard keeps it, for many, just that—coveted. But thanks to an innovative manufacturer there is now a way to satisfy that craving without ransoming your future. This company produces a *brass-plated* headboard that looks remarkably like the real thing. The uprights are a full 2" in diameter, just like the old style brass beauties. The plating job is well done and should stand up to years of normal use. While this all-metal headboard is obviously not as heavy as one of solid brass, it is still plenty sturdy. The overall effect is the feel of an authentic brass bed at a fraction of the price. The twin size headboard (39" wide) costs just **$54.00** ($5.95) #SRA201, full size (54") **$67.00** ($7.95) #SRA202, Queen (60") **$77.00** ($12.95) #SRA203, King (78") **$87.00** ($12.95) #SRA204. The headboard comes unassembled, but a screwdriver and 30 minutes is all you'll need to have it fully mounted. This is truly a brass bed to enjoy; you won't lie awake nights worrying over how much it costs.

A HOT TEA POT

Politics gave tea a bad name in this country. But the welcome our Brown Betty teapot has received of late proves this is changing since a certain tea party was held in Boston in 1773. Extraordinary subtleties of design are required to make an ideal teapot. For example, the shape needs to be rounded with just the right degree of squatness, so that the tea swirls gently after the water is poured in, assuring a perfectly balanced infusion. But the critical choice is material: what do you use to make the teapot? You use a special red clay that is available only in one small district in England. This clay is legendary for its abilities to hold the heat in the teapot and to coddle the brew—attributes that make a truly classic teapot. All these qualities and more can be found in the Brown Betty redware

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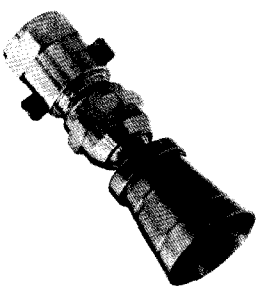
WATER AND MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN

The success of the ShowerSaver—our best seller—shows Americans are committed to saving energy *and* hard-earned cash. America got to its place of world prominence by the energy and inventiveness of its people and the energy in the ground. Running short of the latter, the best and brightest scientists and technologists have been hard at work insuring the energy we burn is used sensibly and efficiently. The ShowerSaver is one result of this work; it cuts the use of hot water in the shower from 8 to 10 gallons a minute to 2.2 gallons. Studies show heating water in a house



is second only to the cost of heating that house. With the normal shower head—designed when energy was plentiful and cheap—the average family of four uses 300 to 400 gallons of water—most of it heated—every day. With the ShowerSaver that same family uses 70% less water or, according to figures from the U.S. Department of Energy, a savings of up to $350 a year for electrically heated water or $195 for gas-heated water.

Made of chrome-plated solid brass, it is guaranteed for one year. It installs easily over the standard ½" pipe with pliers or a wrench, and no plumber is needed. We offer the ShowerSaver for **$19.00** ($2.95) #SRA76. At that price, it will pay for itself in a matter of months.

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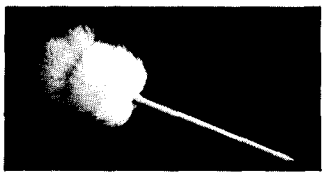
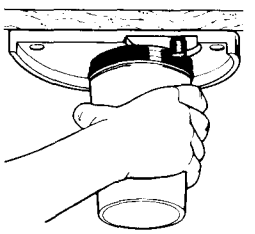
DUST MAGNET



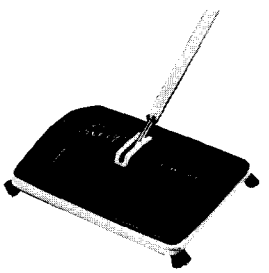
The timeless appeal of the lambswool duster proves the old ways are sometimes better ways. This remarkable implement originated, the best we can tell, in 19th-century England where it quickly put the feather-duster to shame. On its own it actually attracts and holds dust like a magnet. The static charge in the lambswool causes dust literally to leap off surfaces where it has accumulated, making this just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. Its magnetic qualities also are perfect for gathering cobwebs from the tops of windows or from ceiling corners. We offer a 20" authentic lambswool duster for **$8.00** ($1.95) #SRA163.

ONE-HANDED MARVEL

There are innumerable jar-openers on the market but none as clever— or as popular with our readers—as this gadget, the Un-Skru, marketed independently by a Denver man. With this aid, even the most stubborn jar top can be opened using only one hand. No more straining or rapping the jar on a counter edge or running hot water on the lid until you eventually free it—or making an unscheduled change in the menu. The Un-Skru mounts unobtrusively and easily under a shelf or cabinet and works on any lid from ⅜" to 3⅜". It is made to survive years of everyday use. We can send the Un-Skru for **$8.00** ($1.95) #SRA85. We can say without reservation that every kitchen should have one.



A CLEAN SWEEP



It is said that the electric vacuum cleaner is a labor saver. But when faced with those small cleanups that occur daily just whose labor is it saving by the time you tote and haul it, plug it in and pack it away again? This small but mighty non-electric carpet sweeper has shown itself to be perfect for those quick and dirty jobs. The Clean Sweep is a newly designed, non-electric lightweight carpet sweeper that cleans like gangbusters. It even works on bare floors and on those hard-to-clean places like stairs and closets. The Clean Sweep is noiseless, only 9½" wide, half the weight of the traditional carpet sweeper, and it comes with corner brushes for getting into hard-to-reach places. It is also extremely well made, with all-steel construction and a replaceable boar-bristle rotor brush. The Bissel Co. provides a full 5 year warranty. **$28.00** ($2.95) #SRA275.

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Apparently noise has its place in the modern world. In the high-decibel world we live in, the human voice or human whistle just isn't what it used to be. To hail a cab, call the children or call for help, the aptly named Thunderer Whistle allows you to stand out in a crowd and be heard! Doormen know the value of a good whistle on a rainy night when there are too many riders and too few cabs. And when alone, the Thunderer Whistle can work as a personal body guard. This amazing whistle is made in England of beautifully polished solid brass and comes with a key ring, keeping it ever handy. This ½-oz. of protection sells for only **$6.50** ($1.45) #SRA22. Probably all the sound you'll ever need comes from 1¾" Thunderer Whistle.

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There are 20 million black cats in France and a growing number here. Not the ordinary kind of cats with fur and purr, but *Le Chat Noir,* clever cat impersonations pressed from metal plate. These silhouette cat faces, just under 6" square, have clear glass eyes that glint at the slightest bit of light and create an uncanny impression of a real cat. *Le Chat Noir* is made to work. Hung in the garden, they keep birds and rabbits from your delicacies. It is a simple, silent, humane way to protect fruits and vegetables. (City dwellers can just as effectively keep their windowsills free from the annoyance of pigeons.) When not gainfully employed, they can decorate window panes or what-have-you. Imported from France, *Le Chat Noir* is **$7.00** ($1.95) #SRA143.

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RECORDS

Stephen Wadsworth

Hidden Haydn

Some of Franz Joseph Haydn's 21 operas are lost or incomplete. None has ever been considered important, either in Haydn's oeuvre or in the operatic canon. Yet by 1982, when we'll all be celebrating the 250th birthdays of Haydn, Fragonard, and George Washington, every known operatic note by the father of the symphony will probably be available on disc.

In the forefront, with Antal Dorati as guiding light and maestro, Philips has been busy with a cycle of Haydn's nine major operas. The seven so far released span the years of Gluck's maturity and Mozart's middle-period operas, 1775-1783. Every summer, Dorati—kept *au courant* by a phalanx of ardent Haydn scholars—takes a cast of fresh, characterful voices to Lausanne and breathes life into an opera or two for Philips's skillful producer and crew.

On a long list of mammoth recorded sets and cycles that appeal to the consumer who aspires to Have It All, Haydn's operas don't sound like a big buying priority. But this cycle, besides unfailingly maintaining a high standard of musical performance, is actually a creative project, not just another block of Beethoven symphonies.

For one thing, in festival-class performances with the most musical singers money can buy, these operas are revealed as plenty major, qua opera and also qua Haydn. For another, opera houses and festivals, from Glyndebourne to Aix-en-Provence to Caramoor, are now regularly giving Haydn's operas new life onstage, and for that blessed resurgence of faith Papa Haydn's papa scholar, H.C. Robbins Landon, claims these Dorati records are "solely and completely responsible." The Haydn series has been recognized with major awards for both musical and musicological distinction.

Haydn's operas are insightful and felicitous in the extreme but rarely achieve the psychological depth and truth that Mozart, one of the great musical dramatists, commanded concurrently at only half Haydn's age. However, a surprising number of Mozart's most profound musico-dramatic inspirations are eerily foreshadowed by Haydn's, which were in every case committed to paper several years before Mozart got around to them. Haydn's vocal and orchestral writing is comparable to Mozart's, though, and the end-of-act ensembles in **La Fedeltà Premiata** (No. 6707028, 4-record set, $39.92) and **Orlando Paladino** (No. 6707029, 4-record set, $39.92) are, in Dorati's words, "just as good as the big Mozart finales."

Both Dorati and Landon recommend either of these two operas above the others in the cycle to the collector who only wants one. Asked which of Haydn's qualities the operas bring out, Dorati stresses wit and Landon compassion. In general, wit keeps Haydn's operas moving, and compassion, while deepening them, slows them down; in Landon's words, "In opera after opera he suddenly gets monumentally sidetracked with these downtrodden people, and the action sort of stops." Not in *La Fedeltà Premiata* (Fidelity Rewarded), though. This numbskull pastoral, ripping with character and event, combines pathos and humor delectably. *Orlando Paladino*, a tongue-in-cheek yet touching song of Roland, isn't far behind.

How important are the operas in Haydn's oeuvre? Dorati says, "Haydn himself rated them very high. That should give you a clue." Dorati would include an opera in a basic library of five Haydn recordings, but Landon wouldn't: "An opera comes sixth." More important for him are one recording each of the Opus 20 and 76 string quartets, some late London symphonies, a mass, probably the "Nelson," and a big oratorio, probably *The Creation*.

Nevertheless, Landon, whose worldwide roamings and ravings on behalf of these operas (and indeed everything Haydnian) could be labeled, like *Orlando Paladino*, a *dramma eroicomico*, calls the Philips Haydn opera cycle "the finest thing Dorati has ever done, even finer than his complete Haydn symphonies for London. He's got the *pace* so marvelously. I cannot imagine Haydn himself having conducted them any differently."

You don't have to be H.C. Robbins Landon to enjoy these operas. They can no longer be considered a back alley for Haydn, nor should they be regarded as an indulgence of the recording industry or some musical elite. They are a new and happy fact of our operatic lives. ■

Stephen Wadsworth, former managing editor of *Opera News*, contributes articles to many musical publications here and abroad.

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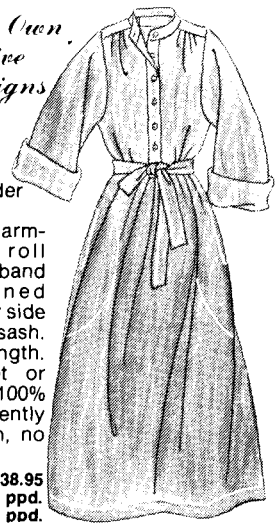

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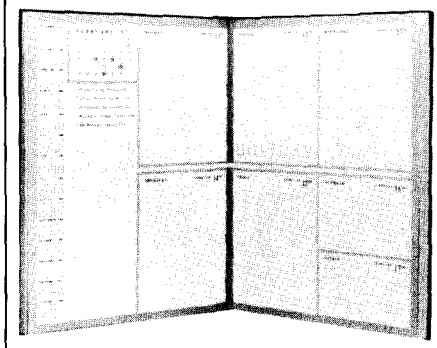

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MUSIC

Irving Kolodin

How to Cure the Met

As the starter for a normal Metropolitan Opera season, Alban Berg 's *Lulu* brings together everything unsuitable for such an occasion: grim stage action from the playwright Frank Wedekind, nonvocal music that is consistently hard to deliver, little that can be called entertainment.

But as the starter for an abnormal season that was delayed for two months by labor disputes, it aroused a surge of artistic vitality that transcended almost everything heard in the Metropolitan Opera House during the last five years.

Bringing together the brilliant best of conductor James Levine's abilities in the pit, a historically outstanding Lulu by Teresa Stratas, the advent of a new singing-acting personality in Franz Mazura as Dr. Schön, a neatly purposeful Countess Geschwitz by Evelyn Lear, and a potent Alwa by Kenneth Riegel, under the skillful direction of John Dexter, this example of the Metropolitan at its most fulfilling provided much needed momentum.

In the aftermath of such an accomplishment and its ongoing influence, it is worth remembering that in the labor-management "unpleasantness" last fall, management won a four-year contract that will carry through the Met's centennial season of 1983-1984.

Crucial to this time period is a well-publicized campaign to raise an endowment fund of $100 million. What happens then? The inescapable reality is that opera seasons are now planned more than two years in advance. With 1980 gone, barely 24 months remain before the season *after* the centennial will be taking shape. Will it be along the same lines as those of the past several decades?

Before Rudolf Bing took command in 1950, the Met cultivated a cadre of subscribers who paid in advance for their tickets and thus were assured of the best locations at prices they could afford. Fine idea. But to provide useful flexibility, management held an option on the number of performances included in the subscription pattern:

***Lulu*: Stratas, Andrew Foldi, Riegel.**

When a new artist of great ability or an important production earned a warm welcome, more performances could be worked into the schedule. Out of Bing's orderly mind (and an understandable desire to lock-in the talent he needed), came the plan for an entirely presubscribed season, *and* the working capital it would bring in.

But the idea didn't work so well in the Sixties, and it hasn't artistically, in the Seventies. Top artists are less available for extended engagements than they used to be. The most desirable conductors have dwindled in quantity. The best of them have too many other concerns to give the Met six or more weeks to rehearse a new production and then to conduct it the number of times Met subscription patterns require.

Now the question is: Why preserve a subscription pattern when the period of artistic justification has run its course? If the Met wants a $100-million endowment fund, shouldn't it be required to guarantee some new life and flexibility in its scheme of presentation? Won't that amount of money, suitably invested, reduce the need for preseason cash? Isn't it urgent that the Met's mode of scheduling performances work, for a change, *with* the artists it wants rather than the other way around? Isn't it absurd that a singer of Birgit Nilsson's greatness cannot be accommodated at the Met because schedules are set for several seasons to come? San Francisco does its job better.

The investment of time and effort to create a working relationship between the Met and the artists its public deserves has benefits and by-products that look to the future as well as the present. When Karl Böhm was given the opportunity to create the Metropolitan's first, fine production of Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in 1966, the public profited from his pride in achievement that brought him back whenever the work was rescheduled a decade later. Such an investment of time and effort could produce the same enduring results with a production of Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* under Georg Solti, Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* under Colin Davis, Rossini's *La Cenerentola* under Claudio Abbado, etc. etc.

Ways to reshape the subscription system can be suggested anytime the Met management makes up its mind the time has come. The sooner the better, beginning with Season I of Century II. ■

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SR Competition No. 17

Your recent success with the Clerihew convinces us that you are now ready for an even more demanding form, the Double Dactyl (and we thank Constance A. Sancetta of West Nyack, New York, for reminding us of it). The poet Anthony Hecht invented it in Rome in 1951 (his definitive book *Jiggery Pokery: A Compendium of Double Dactyls*, New York, 1967, may be consulted with profit), though the good nature of our reader Sancetta appears to have been abused by persons claiming to have originated it at Swarthmore College in the mid-1960s. In the strict-constructionist version the rules are ironclad, sort of. Eight lines, divided into two quatrains, each line a dactylic dimeter (or double dactyl: '— —' — —), except for 4 and 8, which are truncated, lacking the two final unstressed syllables ('— —'), and which must *rhyme*. Line 1 must consist of nonsense syllables, line 2 of a proper name, and line 6, or preferably 7, of a *single word*. Under the sway of celestial inspiration, these rules show a happy tendency to relax. After all, winning is not everything. At any rate, we offer as a model our own composition, in which we gratefully immortalize Miss Sancetta:

Omigosh! Omigosh!
Constance A. Sancetta
Came to our rescue in
The nick of time!

How could we thank her ex-
Cept by this stupidly
Sesquipedalian
Effort to rhyme?

At the rate of $25 each, surely three of you can do better than this. Kindly state that the entry is your own unpublished work.

Entries for Competition No. 17 must be received by March 6 and the winners will be announced in the May issue. Send submissions to *SR* Competition No. 17, *Saturday Review*, 150 East 58 Street, New York, New York 10155. All entries become the property of *SR*.

Winners of No. 14

You were to dream up some fanciful ancestor who was responsible for your being, in the ultimate fine-tuning of ethnicity, a macaroon, harpoon, etc. One correspondent, Peggy Fox of Brooklyn, New York, whose letterhead suggests a familiarity with publishing, guessed that this was sure to be "a 12-sack contest." She was right—well, almost right—for though the number of English words ending in the sound -oon is obviously limited, there seems to be no limit to the number of *SR* readers who want to squeeze all the available fun out of this tiny inventory.

Speaking of correspondence, we wish space permitted us to print (and answer) all the lively comments that accompanied the entries. Here are samples of what we might say. No, Mr. X, this was not an exercise in "cryptoracism" (the best way to get rid of absurd terms like *octaroon* is to laugh them out of existence). Thanks, Mrs. Y, for telling us that you got through a root-canal job by concentrating on entries. We will inform NC of this new therapy. And apologies, Ms. Z, that you and your friend kept waking each other up all night long with even funnier and more ribald genealogies for a "balloon." None printable, we fear.

Despite the numerous entries, we only found two that were truly worthy of prizes. First prize to Esther Whitehead of Tyler, Texas:

> Alas, I'm a picaroon—a rogue, a brigand, a pirate; the disreputable offspring of a father who played both the piccolo and the bassoon. (His favorite tunes were from *Brigadoon*.)
>
> I grew up spooning down my Cajun grandmama's spicy langouste gumbo—watered down somewhat for an infant. With that epicurean heritage (and overlooking all my ups and downs), I'm proud to be called a lagoon.
>
> I have the misfortune to be labeled a "prune." Though rather prudish in nature, my great-grandmother Plum Blossom—a native of Muscat, Oman—believed in raisin' her children in the sun. Thus did I inherit the dominant, wrinkled gene. . . .

Second prize to Mary Lines of San Francisco, who imbedded her three entries in a single paragraph:

> The forbidden photo album was finally mine. The old-fashioned pictures, with their neat inscriptions underneath, were curious in the extreme. Many of the stern top-hatted men and crinolined women appeared to be identical twins. Many of their ringleted offspring seemed to be suffering or recovering from fevers. Most shocking of all was the sight of a buxom great-aunt straining the seams of a man's tuxedo, or a brawny great-grandfather in a frilly dress. I had long suspected the hereditary nature of what I share with them—my being both a DOUBLOON and a TYPHOON. Now, however, that I realize no inherited tendency can be blamed upon me, I freely admit what I have long concealed from the world: I am a DRAGOON!

Puzzles

Literary Crypt No. 162

BIG QUEBEQ ..... AQLUQGYX ALP BIG JYLX LB LYY STU PLBQIERZ IEA UGLQBETR BT EB.

G.O. PIEBG

Wit Twister No. 174

EDITED BY ARTHUR SWAN

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash with a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.

The _ _ _ _ _ _ _ board the ship, cut down the crew,
And force from fops who _ _ _ _ _ _ _ the upper deck
The last _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ , crown, doubloon, or sou,
Before their _ _ _ _ _ _ _ quit the corpse-strewn wreck.

A.S.

January Answers

Literary Crypt No. 161

Self-discovery is more likely to take place. . . . in the fiction called fiction than in the fiction called autobiography.

Jessamyn West

Wit Twister No. 173

septa, peats, pates, spate, tapes, paste

Middleton Double-Crostic No. 203

MARIO PEI: THE STORY OF LANGUAGE

An account of the way an exasperated Cockney tried to spell out the name of the town of Ealing for. . . the telephone operator runs. . . : "E for 'eaven, A for wot 'orses eat, L for where you're going, I for me, N for wot lays eggs, and G for gawd's sake keep your ears open!"

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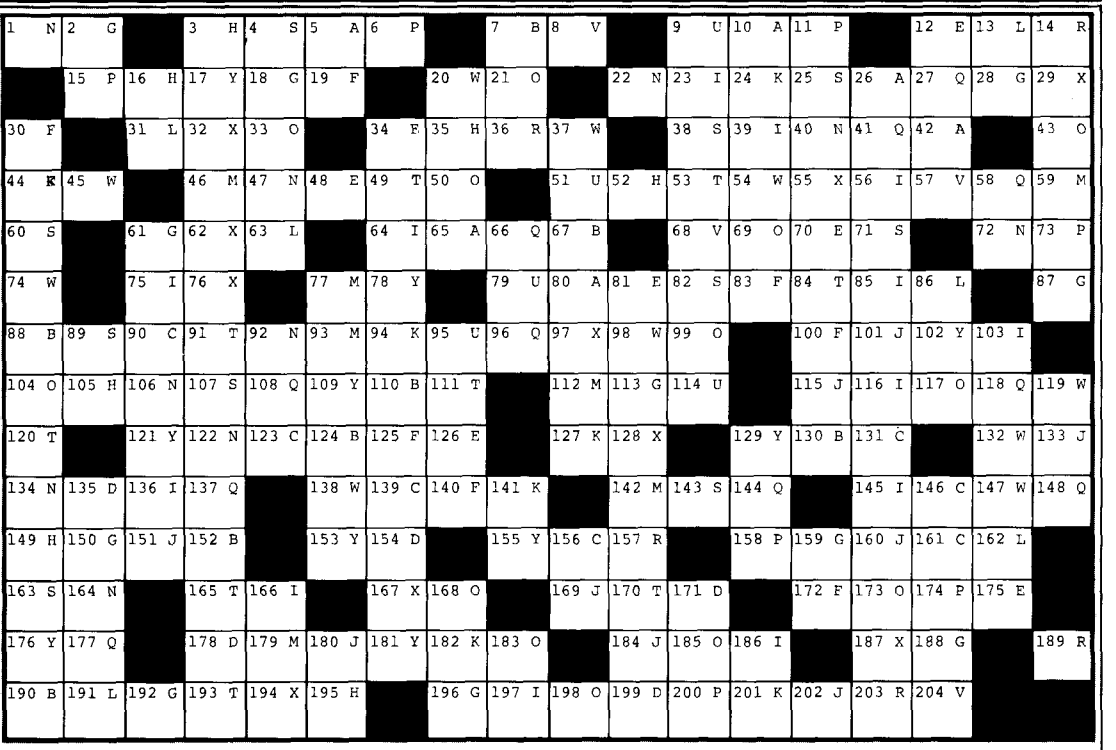
Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.
The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.
The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.
You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.



Middleton Double-Crostic No 204

CLUES	WORDS
A. Life-giving drink of the gods	5 10 26 42 65 80
B. Come into close contact	88 110 152 130 190 7 67 124
C. Make coarse	131 156 90 123 139 146 161
D. Clio and Terpsichore, e.g.	178 135 154 171 199
E. Never growing outdated	12 34 48 70 81 126 175
F. Provoked	19 30 83 100 125 140 172
G. Cuttlefish, octopus, etc.	192 18 28 113 61 150 159 196 2 87 188
H. Deep dull red	35 105 149 3 16 52 195
I. March 1793 to July 1794 in France (3 wds.)	197 39 56 75 85 166 64 103 116 136 145 186 23
J. Small, delicate fish cooked whole without being cleaned	184 101 151 169 202 115 133 160 180
K. Vocalized	24 44 94 127 141 182 201
L. Hectored	13 31 86 162 191 63
M. Immediate proximity or association	46 77 93 112 179 59 142
N. Having a milky iridescence	164 22 40 47 92 1 72 106 122 134
O. Kicked up a racket (3 wds.)	183 43 69 99 104 33 117 185 198 50 168 173 21
P. Moving back and forth	15 73 6 158 200 11 174
Q. Dealings, communications	27 58 118 137 96 108 177 148 41 66 144
R. Distinguished, eminent	203 36 157 189 14
S. Advancing (3 wds.)	4 25 163 38 60 71 82 107 89 143
T. "The ___ LIFE-IN-DEATH was she" (comp.; Coleridge, "The Ancient Mariner")	53 84 165 170 193 91 49 120 111
U. Capital of Hejaz, Saudi Arabia	9 114 51 79 95
V. Newts	57 68 204 8
W. Low-spirited	45 119 54 147 20 74 37 98 132 138
X. Formation of a paradigm; modulation	187 62 128 29 194 55 167 97 76 32
Y. One who believes that faith alone is necessary to salvation	102 78 181 153 176 129 17 109 121 155

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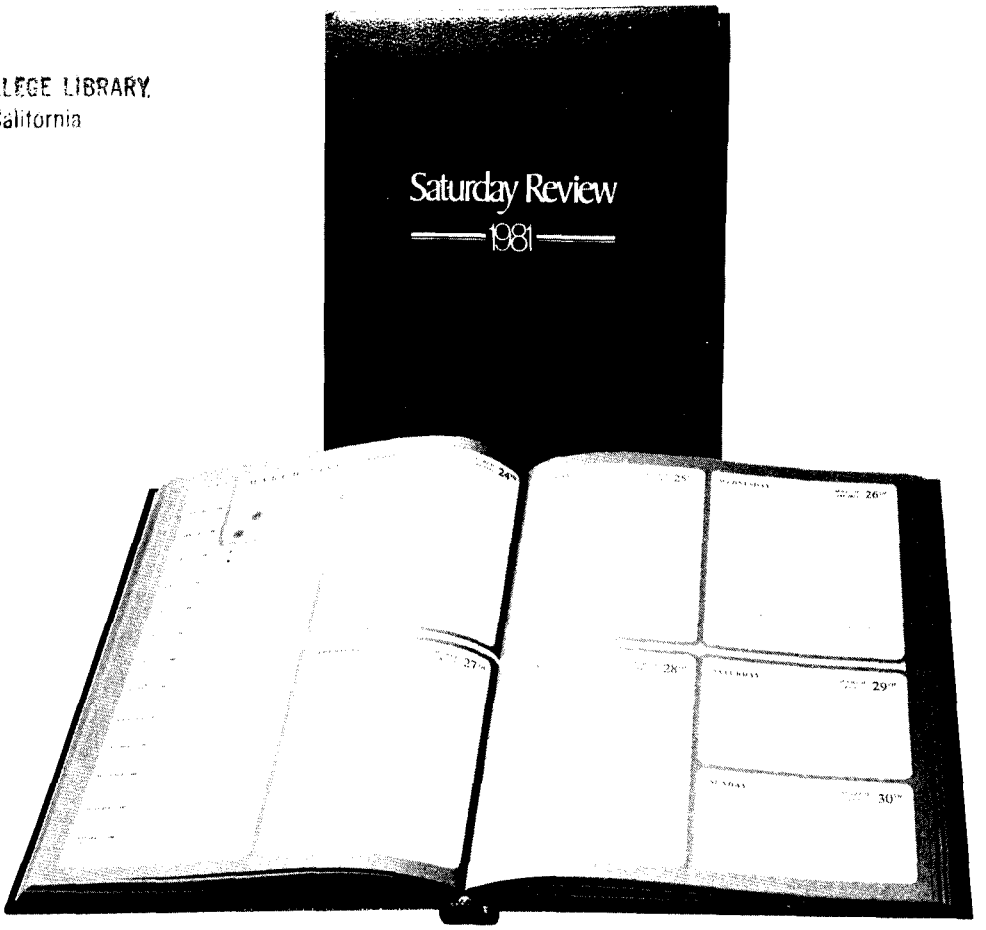

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SR RECOMMENDS

Books

Fiction

Housekeeping, by Marilynne Robinson (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 219 pp., $10.95). This extraordinary first novel is about families and transients, people who are happy in boxcars and people so lonely "they are conspicuous in bus stations." It is sensuous, funny, and mythic, as penetrating as the chilly wind off a glacial lake and as fierce, in its way, as Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*.

Nuns and Soldiers, by Iris Murdoch (Viking, 512 pp., $14.95). The death of a senior civil servant signals a whole round of intense adventures for his wife Gertrude and their circle of rich, gossipy friends. Iris Murdoch's 20th novel is one of her best. Like all of her earlier works, it is a story of joyful questing—for love, for duty, for innocence.

Nonfiction

The Shock of the New, by Robert Hughes (Knopf, 423 pp., $17.95). All the standard landmarks of modern art are here, and each new movement is treated thematically, with just enough of a chronological skeleton to hold it together as history. Erudite, perceptive, a brilliant writer, critic Robert Hughes is ready to go for the jugular of a sacred cow or pay it reverence, as the case may justify. Easily the best book to date on 20th-century art.

Ambition: The Secret Passion, by Joseph Epstein (E.P. Dutton, 320 pp., $12.95). Mingling graceful, learned meditations on the cultural emblems of ambition (money, success, failure, society, work) with biographical vignettes of people who have lived for or died from ambition's costs (e.g. the Rockefellers, the Kennedys, F. Scott Fitzgerald), Joseph Epstein has given us the image of our own entangled wishes and fears. A rich intellectual fare, spiced with well-told tales and reasoned admonitions.

The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's Final Solution, by Walter Laqueur (Little, Brown, 276 pp., $12.95). In 1942, a young Pole named Jan Karski went at great risk to his own life to warn the leaders of the West about Hitler's final solution. Karski might as well have stayed at home—he was either ignored or disbelieved. *The Terrible Secret* is a low-key, factual indictment of Allied politicians. One only wishes that this brilliant book were fiction not fact.

Ways of Escape, by Graham Greene (Simon & Schuster, 256 pp., $10.95). The known Greene fictional technique —the eye lighting on the incongruous and pathetic—can be seen at work in this entertaining rehash of introductions written for the collected edition of his books, along with other odd essays "on episodes in my life and on some of the troubled places I have found myself involved for no good reason." An oblique look at the master of the exalted adventure story.

Film

Breaker Morant. This fine Australian film about the controversial trial of a folk hero in the Boer War goes far beyond the confines of thrilling courtroom drama to touch upon universal —perhaps eternal—questions of "following orders" and wartime morality.

SR's Phoenix Code

- Outstanding
- Excellent
- Good
- Notable

Nine To Five. Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Dolly Parton are delightful as three corporation employees who break out of their "pink-collar ghetto" and prove that revenge is funny as well as sweet. Far from the simplistic Women's Lib movie one might expect, Colin Higgins's comedy takes off with his star's talents and his off-beat wit.

Bye Bye Brazil. Carlos Diegues's new film, offering a charming little story of a tiny, tacky carnival troupe crisscrossing the country, takes subtle and compassionate note of the changes and destructive forces that development can bring to an underdeveloped area.

Theater

The Pirates of Penzance (Uris Theater, New York City). Director Wilford Leach and music director William Elliott set an overall tone of intelligence and charm. This *Pirates* has been put together by contemporary Americans who love and respect the work but who will not try to mimic Victorian Englishmen or their descendants. Unapologetically starring pop singers Linda Ronstadt as Mabel and Rex Smith as Frederic.

The Elephant Man (Booth Theater, New York City). The play—not the movie. An innocent but monstrously disfigured man becomes a socially modish figure in Victorian London. The play satirizes antiquated morality (always an easy target), but its sense of humanity is honest and moving.

42nd Street (Winter Garden Theater, New York City). "Hear the beat/of dancing feet," says the title song, and never did a lyric fix a show's essence more neatly. Choreographed by the late Gower Champion on Thirties models, the brisk tappings carry us along on a pleasant tide of nostalgia. The show is just chunks of agreeable stuff that make us feel things were better back then.

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Records

Lulu, Berg (Deutsche Grammophon 2711024, 4 discs; cassette 3378086, $39.92). For complexity, lyricism, and expressionist edge, soprano Teresa Stratas matches Berg's now-completed (by Friedrich Cerha) score note for note. Her full-throated performance is pandered to by the cast and orchestra of the 1979 Paris premiere, finely tuned by conductor Pierre Boulez and director Patrice Chéreau, and now by DG's engineers. A brilliant recording in every respect.

Violin Concertos Opus 8, Vivaldi (Vanguard VSD 71257, 71273, 71274; 3 separate discs, $7.98 each). Trevor Pinnock's English Concert with baroque violinist Simon Standage, winsome in style and captivating in tone, do their magic for these 12 concertos, titled "The Trial of Harmony and Invention." The first album comprises *The Four Seasons*, and it surpasses any other version on record—intimately descriptive of every buzzing bee and falling leaf. Concertos for flute and cello leaven this delightful loaf.

Cantatas, Clérambault (Archiv 2533 442, $9.98). *Orphée* and *Médée*, solo cantatas unrivaled in the French baroque for eloquence and ardor, are ravishingly sung by Rachel Yakar, one of tomorrow's major sopranos. She is accompanied by Alan Curtis and Musica Antiqua Köln, one of Germany's finest old-instruments ensembles.

Songs, Richard Strauss (Deutsche Grammophon 2531 076, $9.98). German baritone Bernd Weikl eschews the heady, *innig* Fischer-Dieskau approach to lieder for vocal and interpretive spontaneity. Burly-voiced but refined, he rejoices in Strauss's tenderness and sexuality.

Lulu: Suite, Berg (CBS M35849, $8.98) If the now-completed Lulu intrigued you at the Met, *Live From the Met*, or in the press, but not enough for you to essay Deutsche Grammophon's weighty 4-disc recording, try Berg's own suite, a persuasive distillation of the opera's complexity, lyricism, and expressionist edge. Pierre Boulez and the New York Philharmonic do well by it here. Judith Blegen solos in Lulu's credo. Jesseye Norman sings the luscious concert aria, *Der Wein*.

Symphonies, Dvorak and Tchaikovsky. London's Philharmonic Orchestra is playing the romantic repertory with rich tone and feeling these days. Here they take on two Slavic regulars. Andrew Davis presides over an unusually graceful reading of Dvorak's 9th, "From the New World" (CBS M35834, $8.98); and with an expansive tumble through the "Pathetique" (Angel SZ-37626, $8.98), Riccardo Muti and the orchestra close out their cycle of Tchaikovsky's symphonies.

Dance

Alwin Nikolais Dance Theater (City Center, New York City). The best in multimedia avant-garde dance, featuring the New York premiere of Nikolais's new work, *The Mechanical Organ*. (February 11 through 22.)

Boston Ballet—George Balanchine Festival (Metropolitan Center, Boston). One of America's major national ballets will present a program of such Balanchine classics as *Symphony in C*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Stars and Stripes*, and *Serenade*. (February 5 through 8.)

The Essence of American Dance (Kennedy Center Opera House, Washington D.C.). A dance package opening with the Dance Theater of Harlem (February 10 through 15), America's only all-black classical dance company; followed by the Eliot Feld Ballet (February 17 through 22), run by one of the foremost choreographers of the younger generation. Martha Graham, the empress of modern dance, and certainly a "four phoenix" artist, closes the package with the Martha Graham Dance Company. (February 24 through March 1.)

Les Grandes Ballets Canadiens (Lehman College Center for the Performing Arts, Bronx, New York.). The Canadiens, which began as a television dance group, has become one of Canada's foremost ballet troupes. (February 5 through 7.)

Art

Now I Lay Me Down to Eat: a Salute to the Unknown Art of Living (Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York City). Bernard Rudofsky has assembled images and objects from ancient Judea, medieval Europe, Japan, and elsewhere to suggest that our present-day manners and mores may, for all their seeming naturalness, be quite odd. At Christ's Last Supper, for example, the Apostles probably reclined, instead of sitting up on chairs, as Renaissance paintings suggest. Nearly all the habits of eating, sleeping, and bathing that we have developed since Leonardo da Vinci's day are called into question by this exhibition and by the acerbic, eclectic book of the same title, which Rudofsky has designed to accompany it. (Through February 22.)

Gold of El Dorado: the Heritage of Colombia (The New Orleans Museum of Art). Another traveling block-buster, this is genuinely impressive—showcase after showcase of delicate and bizarre artifacts made by the goldsmiths of the Andes. Much of their work was melted down and shipped back to Spain in the form of ingots. Of the fraction that survived, most is housed in Bogota's Gold Museum, where it serves as the basis of Colombian currency. This exhibition is, of course, only a fraction of that fraction, yet it is staggering. (Through March 29.)

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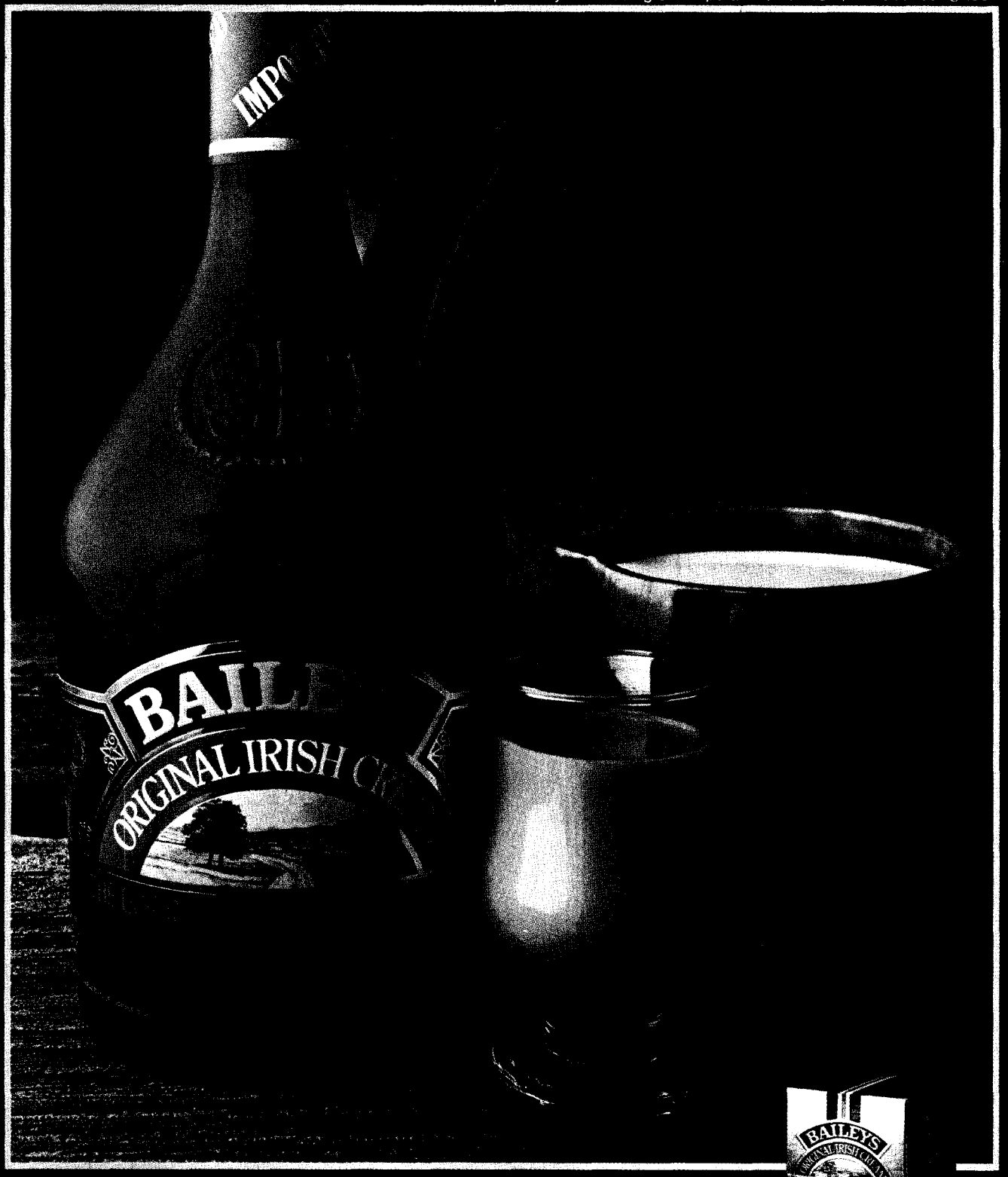

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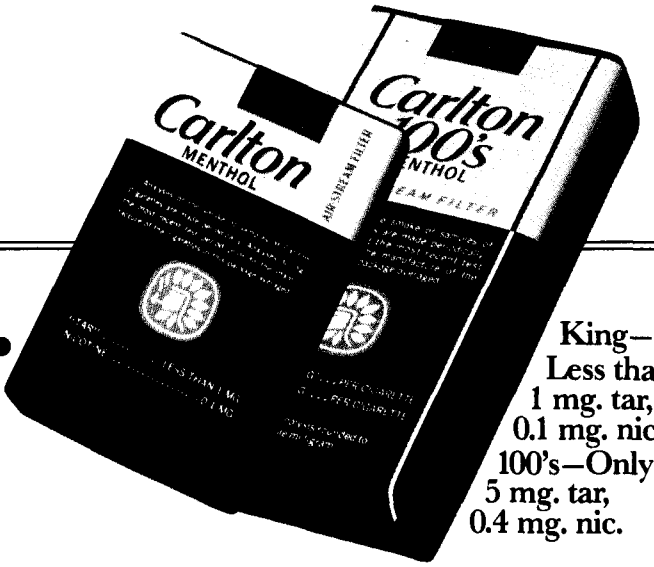

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